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Interview of the Irish Chieftains with PRINCE JOHN at Waterford

TRUE STORIES

FROM THE

HISTORY OF IRELAND.

BY

JOHN JAMES M'GREGOR,

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,"

&c. &c.

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TO THE YOUTH OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS,

THIS COMPENDIUM OF IRISH HISTORY

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED;

WITH THE HOPE

THAT IT MAY TEND TO EXCITE IN THEIR MINDS

A TASTE FOR THE STUDY OF A SUBJECT,

WHICH HAS, UNHAPPILY,

BEEN TOO MUCH NEGLECTED BY THEIR FATHERS.

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INTRODUCTION.

IRELAND, in extent and population, comprehends about a third part of the British empire in Europe. Its length is more than three hundred English miles; its breadth about one hundred and ninety, while its population exceeds seven millions, a greater number of inhabitants in proportion to its size than any European country possesses, with the exception of the island of Malta. The constant freshness of its verdure, owing to the mild temperature of the climate, has obtained for it the name of the Emerald Isle. Its fertility is so great, that if the waste lands were cultivated, it is calculated that Ireland could support three times its pre-

sent population. It is less mountainous than Scotland, while its surface is less flat than that of England; so that the intermixture of hill and dale in almost every part of the country, generally adorned with handsome mansions and rich plantations, and enlivened with smiling cornfields and herds of cattle, presents to the eye of the traveller a succession of charming scenery, well calculated to fill his soul with delight and gratitude to bounteous heaven. Numerous rivers and lakes embellish the glowing landscape; many fine cities and towns stand on their margins; while along the coast, commanding promontories form noble havens capable of containing the largest navies, and the surrounding seas abound with an inexhaustible supply of the finest fish.

With these great natural advantages, it is matter of surprize and wonder that the people of Ireland should still be the most wretched portion of the British empire; and particularly when it is acknowledged that they are brave, generous, talented, and industrious, when the means of industry are in their power. But a

great man told the cause some years since, when he said, that God had done much for Ireland, and man but little. Though abounding with beauties and comforts, the gifts of our Creator, this country from the remotest ages has been so torn by civil warfare and distracted by bad passions, that the inhabitants till very lately have been unable, in any degree, to improve their great advantages. It is true, that the sister nations of England and Scotland also suffered many centuries of civil strife, but they have enjoyed with little interruption domestic tranquillity for more than a hundred years, and the advance of their prosperity during that period has been rapid almost beyond belief; so that the writers of Popular Stories for the young people of those countries, can now sit securely under their own vine and fig-tree, while they celebrate the virtuous and heroic actions of their forefathers, who, by their wisdom and their blood, laid the foundation of that prosperity and happiness with which their descendants are now so abundantly blessed.

But though we have not yet attained to this

desirable state, it is no reason that the history of our land of heroes and of song should continue, in this age of advancing light, so little known to its youthful population. I shall, therefore, my young readers, attempt in the following pages to lay before you the most prominent features in the history of your native country. You will find in them much to amuse, no little to lament, and if rightly studied, a considerable portion of instruction. For history teaches by example, and affords incentives to virtue and arguments against vice more powerful than the best-wrought moral theories. But, as the people of this country are the descendants of three different nations, the Irish, the English, and the Scotch, its history should be read with considerable caution; and you should not suffer the cruel and unjust actions committed by the forefathers of any of these to embitter your minds against their descendants. This would be both wicked and unreasonable; and we accordingly find, that as nations advance in knowledge and the fear of God, these foolish prejudices die away. England and Scotland

are inhabited by different races as well as Ireland; in the former the English and Welch, and in the latter the Highlanders and Lowlanders were for many ages perpetually quarrelling; but now they are all loyal and obedient subjects to the same government, and live together in perfect tranquillity.

CHAPTER. I

ANCIENT IRELAND.

Inhabitants — Government — Military Force — Laws — Manners — Religion.

THE ancient history of Ireland is so full of fable, that I can give you but a hasty glance at it. Many different races of men are said to have inhabited the country before the Danonians, who, we are told, came from Norway and Sweden about thirteen hundred years previous to the birth of our Saviour. We know so little about this people that I should not have mentioned them but to tell you an old tradition of the *Laigh Fail*, or Stone of Destiny. The Danonians are said to have brought this famous stone into Ireland, on which our ancient monarchs were crowned, till Fergus the Great,

having conquered Scotland, removed it into that country, relying on an old prediction, which has been thus translated,

> Or Fate's belied, or where this stone is found,
> A prince of Scottish* race shall there be crowned.

This stone was preserved in the Abbey of Scone with the regalia of Scotland till the year 1296, when Edward I. conveyed it to Westminster Abbey; and the Kings of Great Britain, who are lineally descended from our old Irish Kings, have been crowned on it ever since.

The Milesians, a Spanish colony, are said to have arrived in this country about eleven hundred years before the birth of our Saviour.—Some celebrated writers have doubts respecting this Milesian colony, but as their existence is the most generally received opinion, we shall not here dispute it. They were under the guidance of two brothers, Heber and Heremon, who were the progenitors of a long line of kings

* Ireland was then sometimes called Scotia Major, or the greater Scotland.

that ruled for many centuries in different parts of the island. The country, however, appears to have been during that time in such a continual state of distraction, that more than a hundred Irish monarchs are recorded to have perished in battle or by assassination; nor will you wonder at this when you are made acquainted with the nature of the government that then existed.

Ireland, for many hundred years before the English invaded the island, was divided into a pentarchy, or five different kingdoms, viz. Munster, (which being the largest, was again divided into two, North and South,) Leinster, Ulster, Connaught, and Meath. One of the kings always held the dignity of Supreme Monarch, and each had under him various orders of petty chieftains, every one of whom exercised royal power in his own territory. Now you may reasonably suppose, that having so small a country divided into so many little states, must have created endless disorder and confusion among the people, as it was very difficult to prevent them from encroaching on the rights of each

other; and what greatly increased the distractions that then prevailed was, that when a king or chief died, he was not succeeded, as in our times, by his eldest son, but elected by the subordinate chieftains from among the relatives of the deceased prince. These elections often occasioned bitter feuds, which caused great destruction of life and property.

The Supreme Monarch, who was also generally King of Meath, resided at Tarah, in that county, where historians inform us the greatest hospitality and magnificence were displayed. The palace of Eamania, of which some traces still remain near Armagh, was the royal seat of the Kings of Ulster. The chief residence of the Munster Kings, in early ages, was the city of Cashel; but in later times they removed to Limerick, and some remains of Kinkora, the palace of the famous Brian Boiromhe, are still to be seen near Killaloe in the county of Clare.—The Sovereigns of Connaught had their royal residence at Cruachain, not far from Boyle in the county of Roscommon, and the Kings of Leinster, at Ferns, in the county of Wexford.

Not only the principal sovereigns, but the petty chiefs, derived their revenue from the contributions of their vassals, which were usually delivered in corn or cattle. Justice was administered in the open air by a certain description of lawyers, called Brehons; and one of these judgment seats, called the Brehon's Chair, is still shewn on the hill of Kyle, in the Queen's County. Few crimes were at that time punished with death, but by fines proportioned to the offence, which were given to the injured party. The general affairs of the nation were regulated by an assembly which was held every third year at Tarah. The military force of the country consisted of a militia composed of horse and foot. The former were armed with arrows and javelins, and the latter with darts, long swords, pole-axes, and a kind of knives called skeyns. They had but too many occasions to exhibit their bravery, and who has not heard of the exploits of the Irish militia under Fionn Mac Cumhail, as recorded by the Poet Ossian, and our ancient historians?

These writers also inform us, that this

band of heroes, which might be called the Irish standing army, consisted of nine thousand men during peace, and twenty-one thousand in time of war, and that the following qualifications were required to be possessed by every candidate for admission into it:—he should have a poetical genius—be able to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and stoop easily under another as low as his knees—should be charitable to the poor, never do violence to a woman, or turn his back on nine men of any other nation! They had subsistence allowed them only in the winter half-year. In the summer months they were encamped in the fields, and lived by hunting and fishing; and the husbandman is said still frequently to discover marks of their fires. The other troops consisted of the vassals of the crown and of the petty chieftains, who were bound to attend their leader to the field; and they always rushed to the fight to the sound of military music, and the martial cry of *Farrah! Farrah!* that is, Fall on! Fall on! In later times the war-cry of the different septs or clans, terminated with the word *abo!* or

Huzza! with the name of their leader or his crest prefixed—thus the O'Neills' cry was *Lamh-dearg-abo!* Huzza for Red Hand! and that of the Butlers, *Butler-abo!* Huzza for Butler!

You may now be curious to know how the people generally lived in those days.—As the cultivation of corn was then little attended to, the food of the peasantry mostly consisted of milk, wild vegetables, and the flesh of animals taken in hunting, whose skins also furnished them with clothing, before they learned the art of manufacturing woollen and linen cloth. The higher orders enjoyed the luxury of bread usually baked under the embers, and their entertainments exhibited a degree of hospitality which would not shame their descendants of the present day, though not attended with the same accompaniments of magnificent apartments, or splendid furniture. Three-legged tables were covered with milk-meats, bread, and a variety of flesh and fish, dressed in different ways, round which the guests sat on rushes or beds of grass, instead of

chairs or benches; while the attendants served them, in cups of wood, horn, or brass, with mead, a strong drink called curmi, extracted from barley or milk, and sometimes with Poitou wine, which the Irish received from France in exchange for the skins of animals. At these entertainments, bards or minstrels always attended, and sang the praises of their heroes to the music of the harp.

The religion that existed in Ireland before the establishment of Christianity was similar to that which then prevailed in England, and many other countries. It was called the Druidical religion, and its priests appear to have acquired great authority in directing the affairs of the state. They had no temples, but celebrated the rites of their religion in groves of oak, where they worshipped the sun, moon, and other celestial luminaries. We are left very much in the dark as to the opinions and practices of the Druids; for while some writers assert that they had neither idols nor sacrifices; others, and particularly Julius Cæsar, state, that they sometimes made images of osier of a

monstrous size, which they filled with living men, and then setting them on fire, burned the enclosed victims to death.

We have also very imperfect accounts of the Irish Kings while Paganism prevailed in the country. A few, however, have been celebrated for their wisdom and bravery. Amongst these was Ollam Fodhla, the celebrated lawgiver of Ireland, who flourished about eight hundred years before the Christian era. Hugony, Crimthan, and other kings, distinguished themselves in after times by assisting the Scots and Picts against the Romans, and they frequently returned with rich trophies of their prowess.—Niall (surnamed of the Nine Hostages) carried his arms both into England and France, but he perished by assassination A. D. 379, on the banks of the river Loire. There is little doubt that the Irish of that period were as distinguished for their valour as they have been in later times.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

St. Patrick.

By whom Christianity was first introduced into this country is as uncertain, as many other particulars of our early history. It is, however, very generally believed that some Christian churches were established, particularly in the South, before the arrival of St. Patrick. This great and good man, who is called the Apostle of Ireland, was born in Scotland, in the year 372. When only sixteen years old, he was taken prisoner by some Irish pirates, and was kept six years in slavery by an Ulster prince. At the end of that period he escaped, and spent many years under the tuition of his uncle, who was bishop of Tours in France. He af-

terwards entered the church, and continued in France and Italy till he had attained his sixtieth year, when, accompanied by more than thirty assistants, men of great piety and learning, he undertook the mission for the conversion of the Irish, a people by whom he had been so cruelly treated in his youth. He first landed at Wicklow, and converted a prince named Sinell to Christianity, but being greatly opposed by other Pagan chieftains, he was compelled to return to his ship, and directed his course to that part of the North of Ireland where he had formerly been a captive.

I am sure you must feel greatly interested in the future success of our patron saint, as he is called, whose memory is annually celebrated on the 17th of March, not indeed in the manner which the good man, were he now alive, would approve of, as drunkenness and debauchery are very much opposed to the religion which he taught. St. Patrick's first convert in the North was a prince of Down, named Dichu, who immediately erected a church to the true God, near the bay of Dundrum, which

was afterwards called the Abbey of Saul; so that this was the first Christian church in the North of Ireland. After this, he and his companions preached the Gospel with great success in other parts of the North, and in the following year, that is A. D. 433, St. Patrick repaired to Tarah in the county of Meath, where Leogair, then the Supreme Monarch, resided, and at a time when the Grand Convention or Parliament was assembled; and he preached before them with such powerful effect, that the king, the queen, and a great number of the nobility, embraced Christianity; and their example was soon followed by multitudes of the common people. He was equally successful in Dublin, where he baptized King Alphin, with a vast number of his subjects, in a fountain, (from this called St. Patrick's Well,) which the learned Archbishop Usher tells us, stood near the present cathedral church of St. Patrick, and that he saw it in the year 1639, but that soon after it was shut up and enclosed within a private house. Connaught was next blessed by his labours, and St Patrick spent

sixteen years in planting and establishing churches in the three provinces. During this time he founded the city and cathedral of Armagh, and made it the primatial or head see of Ireland.

You may be somewhat surprised that our faithful and zealous Apostle, had not, in all this time visited the great kingdom of Munster; but he knew that some good missionaries had arrived in that quarter, as I told you before, who had for many years been preaching the doctrines of Christianity. They had obtained considerable success among the poor and the middle ranks of the people, but very few of the princes or great men paid any attention to them. St. Patrick, therefore, found it necessary at length to go himself to Munster, hoping that through the blessing of God, he might effect their conversion. And he succeeded according to his wish; for soon after he began his ministry in Cashel, the royal seat of Aengus, king of Munster, that sovereign and all the nobles of his court became obedient to the faith. St. Patrick then made the four missionaries who had

arrived in Munster before him, whose names were Ailbe, Declan, Kiaran, and Ibar, bishops, and placed the church in that kingdom on a regular footing. After spending seven years in travelling about that part of the country, he resigned the government of the See of Armagh, and passed the remaining thirty years of his life in retirement at the Abbey of Saul, where he died A. D. 492, aged one hundred and twenty, and was buried in Downpatrick.

But though all the kings of Ireland with their subjects now openly professed the Christian religion, it appears to have produced little effect on their general character and conduct, though no doubt some good men were occasionally to be found amongst them. The perpetual quarrels between the numerous independent chieftains, and their thirst for military glory, rendered our island during the sixth and seventh centuries a frightful picture of intestine war. The great men, however, evinced much ardour in the building of churches and colleges; and it is very probable that from this circumstance rather than from any superiority in the

practice of piety, Ireland got the name of the Island of Saints. You are not, however, to suppose, that it was at that time in a worse state with regard to religion than the neighbouring nations; for it is too evident from history, that in all countries during what are called the dark ages, the form was too often substituted for the substance of religion; and that while men were building churches and endowing monasteries in honour of their Maker, they indulged the most brutal passions, and practised every vice in opposition to his most sacred prohibitions. There can, however, be little doubt, that learning at that time flourished more in Ireland than in any other country in Europe. This is proved by the magnificent colleges that existed at Armagh, Lismore, (where the great king Alfred is said to have studied,) Clonard and other places, to which students resorted from many foreign kingdoms, and from the fact that some of the highest offices of the Church in France, Italy, and Germany, were filled by Irishmen. Yet notwithstanding the apparently flourishing state of religion and

learning at this time, the Irish historians tell us, that out of twenty-three monarchs who reigned in the sixth and seventh centuries, not less than twenty perished by violent deaths, and many thousands of their subjects experienced a similar fate.

CHAPTER III.

THE DANES.

Battle of Armagh—Heroic Conduct and Death of Niall III.—Horrible Cruelties of Turgesius—Stratagem of the Monarch Malachy—Death of the Tyrant—General Destruction of the Danes.

We have now come to a period in our history, when a new era of suffering opened on this country, by adding the miseries attendant on a foreign invasion to the horrors of domestic strife. In the eighth century hordes of Danes, Norwegians, and other Northern nations, rushed from their inhospitable deserts, to plunder and, if possible, form establishments in the more fertile regions of the South. France, England, and Scotland, were greatly harassed by these barbarians; and towards the close

of the century, bodies of them disembarked on various parts of the Irish coast. They penetrated the country, seized immense plunder, and with merciless rage killed all the inhabitants who fell into their power. Amongst many other depredations in Ulster, they destroyed the famous Abbey of Bangor, and put the monks, nine hundred in number, to the sword; but the massacre of these good men was soon avenged by the king of that country, who destroyed twelve hundred of the barbarians, and drove the remainder to their ships. The people of Leinster and Munster also defeated the invaders in several encounters; but after thus for several years bravely repelling them from their coasts, their own fatal intestine commotions at length rendered the Irish an easy prey to this ruthless enemy.

Hugh V. who then reigned over Ireland, and the provincial kings, instead of uniting their strength to resist the common foe, by whom they were so constantly harassed, were continually quarrelling amongst themselves, and the consequences proved horribly destruc-

tive to the country. You may recollect the fable of the bundle of sticks, which the wise old man when he was dying, desired his sons to attempt to break. They endeavoured in vain to do it—but when their father desired them to separate the bundle, each stick was easily broken. This he did to teach his children the great advantages of union; and without it neither families or nations can be secure or happy. This want of union left Ireland at the mercy of the Northern barbarians for nearly three centuries, and it has been the chief cause of her miseries ever since.

Early in the ninth century, a larger army of the Danes than had been previously landed in Ireland arrived, under the command of Turgesius, the son of Harold Harfager, King of Norway, who dividing his force into three bodies, carried desolation and death through the entire Northern half of the island, while his fleet ravaged the coasts, and plundered Limerick, Cork, and Galway. They spared neither age or sex; and as the Danes were at that time Pagans, the clergy were peculiar objects of

their vengeance, all who escaped death being obliged to conceal themselves in woods, bogs, or subterraneous caves. Many churches, abbeys, and colleges were destroyed, as these barbarians were enemies alike of religion and learning, and in this general devastation many of our ancient records were lost. But while the country was suffering all these calamities, Connor, the reigning monarch, was carrying on a destructive warfare with the people of Leinster, in which thousands perished; and when at length this dispute was terminated by his successor Nial III. and the Irish united to resist their cruel invaders, their strength was so weakened, that the Danes put them to a total route.

After this victory Turgesius proceeded to adopt the most vigorous measures to secure his conquests. He erected fortifications in different parts of the country, many of which still remain, and are known by the name of Danish raths; and having taken Dublin by storm in 838, he built a fort in it, from whence he spread his ravages through all the surrounding

country. But the spirit of the Irish was not yet subdued, and having for a time abandoned their private quarrels, they gained some important advantages over their oppressors. Seven hundred of them were slain by Malachy, King of Meath; while Tomair, prince Royal of Denmark, with twelve hundred of his followers, perished in a battle with the united forces of Munster and Leinster. The monarch Nial III. now resolved on vigorous measures to drive the enemy from his strong holds in Ulster, and after gaining an important triumph over them in Tirconnell (now Donegal) he pursued them to Armagh, their head-quarters. The Danes met Niall in his advance, and the contending hosts fought spear to spear, and man to man, with desperate valour. Victory, however, declared for the native troops; the Danes were completely vanquished; the few survivors of their army fled precipitately towards the river Callan to take refuge in the numerous fortifications which they had erected in that part of the country, and thither they were pursued by the victors

till the night closed upon this scene of carnage.

But the exultation caused by this signal victory, was quickly damped by the death of the heroic Niall, in consequence of an action which confers on his memory more glory than even his triumph over the cruel oppressors of his country. Heavy rains having swelled the Callan, the river had burst its usual bounds, and interrupted the march of the victors to Armagh. At the foot of Tullachmore-hill, which the river divides from Umgola, Niall halted the troops that surrounded his person, and at his command one of the warriors attempted to pass the ford, but was instantly dashed from his horse by the impetuosity of the torrent. Niall commanded his guard to make every effort for his preservation: as they seemed, however, transfixed by terror at the danger, the magnanimous king pushed forward with the generous determination to save the warrior or perish in the attempt. But when he approached the brink of the river, the ground, undermined by the torrent, sank beneath his horse's feet, and the monarch was

precipitated into the flood, where death terminated his career in the 55th year of his age.—Until very lately a simple tumulus or elevation of earth called ‘ Nial's Mound,’ marked the spot on the banks of the Callan where this heroic prince met his death, while human skulls, bones, brazen trumpets, and other vestiges of this sanguinary day, have been frequently found in the neighbouring fields and bogs.

Malachy, the successor of Niall, was a monarch only in name. Turgesius usurped the entire sovereignty of the country, and having received great reinforcements from the North of Europe to support his authority, commenced a system of operations for breaking the spirit and destroying the religion and liberties of the unhappy Irish, the horrible recital of which you cannot read without shuddering. It should, however, make you extremely grateful to God that the times you live in are so different ; and as you grow up to manhood it should render you anxious to support that happy system of government under which you enjoy so many blessings.

Turgesius now spread devastation and rapine on every side. All who resisted were put to instant death, or compelled to fly into the woods or fastnesses, where they perished by thousands. The fate of those who submitted to the tyrant was still more horrible. Danish governors were placed over certain districts of the country, and in every town or village; while the soldiers were quartered in the houses of the people, many of whom were impoverished to supply the wants of these voracious monsters; and their wives and children often became the victims of their libidinous desires. Every master of a family was obliged to pay annually into the tyrant's treasury an ounce of gold, in failure of which his nose was publicly cut off—hence this tax was called the nose-rent. The very kind of clothes they wore was prescribed to them; and they were not allowed to have any social entertainments amongst themselves, to practice any feats of activity or martial sports, to enter any school, monastery, or church, or employ a clergyman, lawyer, or bard. All the churches and monasteries were

either devoted to the flames, or converted into temples for the worship of their gods Woden, Thor and Friga.

Having suppressed every attempt of the natives for the subversion of his cruel tyranny, Turgesius conceived that his authority was now firmly fixed. He took up his residence in the neighbourhood of Malachy, whom he acknowledged only as king of Meath; and at length he carried his insolence so far as to demand for a concubine, the daughter of the unhappy monarch, a princess of great beauty and accomplishments. Incensed as Malachy was at this insulting proposal, he thought it necessary to dissemble, and made it the ground-work of a plan for ridding his country of this vile monster. He even affected to feel pleased with the demand, as a proof of the friendship of Turgesius, and told him that his daughter should be accompanied to his residence by fifteen young ladies of his court, which would probably make her less reluctant to leave her father's palace. As soon as Turgesius had retired, Malachy communicated his project to fifteen youthful warriors on

whose valour and integrity he could depend; and on the appointed night they accompanied the young princess, all dressed in rich female attire, to the palace of the Danish king. Turgesius was then feasting with some of his favourite chieftains, to whom he boasted of this fresh triumph over the unfortunate Malachy; but as soon as the arrival of the princess and her train was announced, he and his licentious companions hastened to receive them, first laying aside their arms, that they might not terrify the ladies. Turgesius immediately advanced towards the princess, when at that moment the Irish youths threw aside the robes by which they had been disguised, drew their swords, and put every one of the Danish chieftains to death, with the exception of Turgesius himself, who was commanded on pain of instant destruction to make no alarm.

Malachy had by this time arrived with a chosen band of soldiers, and having burst into the fort sword in hand, put the whole garrison to death. Turgesius, loaded with fetters, was thrown into prison, and was

drawn a few days after to Loch Annin, in which he was drowned in the presence of thousands of exulting spectators.—"Out flew," says old Campion, "the fame of this action into all quarters of Ireland, and the princes nothing dull to catch hold of such advantage, with one assent rose ready to pursue their liberty. All Meath and Leinster were soon gathered to Malachy, the father of this practice, who lightly leapt to horse, and commending their forwardness in so natural a quarrel, said, 'Lordings and friends, this case neither admitteth delay nor asketh policy, heart and haste is all in all; while the feat is young and strong, that of our enemies some sleep, some sorrow, some curse, some consult, all dismayed, let us anticipate their fury, dismember their force, cut off their flight, occupy their places of refuge and succour. It is no mastery to pluck their feathers but their necks, nor to chase them in, but to rouse them out; to weed them, not to rake them; not to tread them down but to dig them up. This lesson the tyrant himself hath taught me: I once de-

manded him in a parable, by what good husbandry the land might be rid of certain crows that annoyed it; he advised to watch where they had bred, and to fire the nests about their ears. We go thus upon these cormorants that shroud themselves in our possessions, and let us destroy them so, that neither nest, nor root, nor seed, nor stalk, nor stubble may remain of this ungracious generation."

Nor were the natives slow in following this exhortation. In every quarter they rose upon their cruel oppressors, stormed their towns and forts, and slaughtered many of their chief nobility with thousands of their soldiers. Numbers of the Danes fled to their ships, and escaped to their own country, while the few that remained were disarmed and received to mercy by the natives.

CHAPTER IV.

Reign of Flan—Cormac Mac Cuillenan, King of Munster—Battle of Magh-Albe, and Death of Cormac—Settlement of Munster—Story of Callaghan—Perfidy of Sitricus the Dane—Extraordinary Sea Fight at Dundalk—Battle of Singland—Mahon King of Munster—Capture of Limerick—Murder of Mahon.

You are, no doubt, ready to suppose, that the cruel and long protracted sufferings which the Irish had endured under their foreign tyrants, would have taught their rulers the necessity of cultivating union amongst themselves, and guarding with the utmost vigilance against any future inroads of their barbarous enemies. But unhappily this was not the case. The Danish merchants had introduced a taste for

foreign luxuries, and rather than give them up, the Irish entrusted the remnant of their vanquished foes with the guardianship of their sea-ports, the great outworks of the nation; and no sooner were the natives delivered from the detested yoke of the foreigners, than civil discord again burst forth amongst themselves in all its horrors. In the midst of these convulsions fresh colonies of the Northern rovers took possession of the important cities of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick, which they fortified; but various attempts to re-establish their authority in the interior of the country, being repulsed with great slaughter, Ireland, during the reign of the monarch Flan, which commenced in 879, enjoyed an unusual degree of prosperity.—The lands were every where cultivated; the churches and abbeys, which had so long been in ruins, were rebuilt, and the schools of learning again opened and filled with students. But this state of things was too soon interrupted by hostilities between Flan and Cormac Mac Cuillenan, who was at the same time king of Munster and Archbishop of Cashel. Cormac

has been greatly celebrated for his piety and talents, but he unfortunately allowed himself to be too much guided by his relation O'Flaherty, Abbot of Inniscattery, a fiery and ambitious man, who urged him to invade the territories of Leinster, under the unjust pretext of demanding tribute. Though the king entertained a presentiment that he should perish in the expedition, he unaccountably followed the advice of the ambitious abbot, and marched towards Leinster at the head of a numerous army. On the way he was met by a herald from the king of Leinster offering the most honourable terms of peace, which Cormac was disposed to accept; but the furious abbot went so far as to upbraid him with cowardice, and such was his influence over his infatuated sovereign, that he dismissed the ambassador. The monarch Flan, disgusted at this conduct, joined his forces to those of the king of Leinster, and this intelligence spread such alarm amongst the Munster troops, that they broke out into loud murmurs against the king and his unworthy favorite.

But notwithstanding these unfavourable appearances, Cormac was persuaded to engage in an unequal contest, the force of his enemies being more than two to one, and in a cause which was considered unjust even by the principal leaders of his army. From the high character which he had previously possessed, this is the more extraordinary, and presents one of the most striking proofs which history affords us of the fatal influence which unworthy favourites sometimes acquire over the actions of princes. The king of Munster pitched his camp in the plain of Magh-Albe, where he resolved to wait for his antagonist. He divided his army into three bodies, the first of which was commanded by the prince of Ossory and the abbot of Inniscattery (for churchmen often headed armies in those days;) Cormac himself was to lead on the second, and at the head of the third was the prince of the Decies.

The Allies with the monarch of Ireland at their head, were soon in sight of Cormac's encampment; and the moment the signal was made for battle, the prince of Ossory with another

general, who had opposed the war, abandoned a contest which he looked upon as hopeless. The battle began with irresistible fury on the part of the Leinster forces, while the Munster army, dispirited at once by the inferiority of their numbers, and the injustice of their cause, scarcely made resistance, but quickly abandoned the field, and were miserably slaughtered in the pursuit. The king of Munster vainly endeavoured to rally his broken forces by exposing his person wherever danger pressed; but while thus endeavouring to animate his flying soldiers he was flung from his horse into a pit, from whence he was extricated and with difficulty remounted by some of his followers, who after this service abandoned him to his fate.—This was quickly decided, but not by the hand of the enemy. Attempting to climb a steep ascent, made slippery with blood, his horse made a false step, and tumbled with his rider to the bottom. Cormac's neck and back bone were broken, and he instantly expired.

His body being found by a party of the victorious troops, they cut off his head, and

carried it in triumph to the Irish monarch; but the generous Flan, instead of appearing gratified, loudly condemned the barbarous act; taking up the ghastly head, he kissed it, and, with tears, lamented the instability of human greatness, as evinced in the sad fate of this revered prince and prelate, and ordered his remains to be interred with all the respect due to royal dignity. In this sanguinary battle six princes of Munster fell, with many of the nobility and clergy; and the abbot of Inniscattery, the first fomenter of this fatal war, was among the prisoners.

I told you before, that Cormac Mac Cuillenan was an archbishop as well as a king; he was consequently a great friend to the church. He built the cathedral, the ruins of which are still to be seen on the celebrated Rock of Cashel.—He wrote a book called the Royal Psalter, in which he transcribed the ancient records of his kingdom, and by his will he left a number of rich vestments, and a great many ounces of gold and silver to different churches and abbeys. You may be surprised to hear of ounces of gold

and silver, instead of pounds, shillings and pence; but you must understand that at the time when Cormac lived, there was little or no coined money in Ireland except among the Danes; and every thing was paid for in corn or cattle, or with gold and silver by weight. The precious metals were at that time very scarce, as the rich mines of South America were not then discovered. But to make amends for this, all sorts of provisions were exceedingly cheap, so that in those days one could purchase a cow for five shillings which would now cost more than as many pounds.

You may now, I doubt not, be anxious to know what became of the abbot Flaherty, who had advised the good king Cormac to measures which ended in his defeat and death. I told you before that he was taken prisoner by the victorious army, and the clergy and people of Leinster were so enraged against him as the cause of so much bloodshed, that they assailed him with the most opprobrious language, and he was kept in prison during the life of Carol, the king of Leinster. At his death, the abbot was liberated;

but even then such was the rage of the people against him, that they would have torn him to pieces, had not the clergy escorted him out of Leinster. Yet I have the happiness to tell you, that his sufferings, and the recollection of the miseries his bad advice had occasioned, produced a good effect upon him, and he retired to his monastery of Inniscattery, (a celebrated island in the river Shannon, where the ruins of eleven churches are still to be seen;) and there he gave himself up wholly to devotion. But in a few years after this, on the death of Cormac's successor, the abbot Flaherty was called to fill the throne of Munster, and he governed the kingdom with great applause till his death. From the whole of this narrative, we may learn these important lessons, that the best and wisest of men may be led astray by listening to evil counsellors; and that the worst, by repentance and reformation, may again become useful members of society.

The generous monarch Flan died in the year 916, after the unusually long reign in Ireland of thirty-seven years, and was succeeded by Niall

IV. who was soon called to defend his dominions against fresh inroads of the Danes.—Amelanus, after committing great ravages in Munster and Leinster, proceeded to the North, where he stormed the city of Armagh, and put a thousand of the inhabitants to death. The monarch Niall avenged this act of cruelty by a great victory which he gained over Amelanus near Lough Foyle; but the Danes being furnished with fresh reinforcements from their own country under Sitricus, the gallant Niall, with most of his generals, was defeated and slain before he had completed the third year of his reign. His successor was Donogh II. the son of Flan, a man in every way unworthy of such a father, as not only being wholly unequal to the task of governing the country at such a crisis, but because he was the first who had the baseness to enter into an alliance with the destroyers of his country.

The story which I am now going to relate, obliges me to call your attention to the settlement of the kingdom of Munster. After the death of Flaherty, the succession to the crown was

contested for some time between Callaghan, a prince of the same house, and Kennedy the son of Lorcan, king of Thomond, (a country comprising the present counties of Clare, Limerick, and part of Tipperary,) whom Cormac had appointed his successor. Both these families were descended from Olliol-Ollum, a king who reigned in Munster about seven hundred years before; and who, previous to his death, made a singular regulation, that a prince of each family should alternately enjoy the crown. But this had never been acted upon, and forty-four kings of what was called the Eugenian race followed in lineal succession. Callaghan had no military force to support his claim to the crown, yet on the intercession of his mother, the generous Kennedy waved his right, and continued ever after the faithful adviser and friend of his rival. I am more particular in mentioning this circumstance to you, because Kennedy was the father of one of the best friends to his country that Ireland ever possessed, whom I will soon introduce to your notice.

Callaghan was scarcely seated on his throne

when he was called upon to defend it against the ever-watchful enemies of the peace of Ireland. This he accomplished with great vigour and bravery, defeating the Danes in several pitched battles, till he completely reduced their power in Munster. In one of these engagements, the wife and sister of the Danish prince Sitricus, were taken prisoners, and conveyed to Waterford, where they were treated by Callaghan with marked attention until their release. Sitricus was soon after appointed king of Dublin by his countrymen, and believing that the charms of the princess had made some impression on the youthful king of Munster, he laid a stratagem of getting him by this means into his power. Having for some time kept up a friendly correspondence with Donogh, and knowing that he was then on ill terms with the king of Munster, he ventured to disclose his project to him, which was not only acquiesced in, but applauded by that base and inglorious monarch.

Having secured this important point, the crafty Sitricus sent an ambassador to Callaghan

to propose a treaty of alliance to him, and as a means of cementing it, he offered him his sister, the princess Bevina, in marriage. As the young king was already enamoured of this lady's beauty and accomplishments, he lost sight of every prudential consideration which should have prevented him from forming so close a connexion with the devoted enemy of his family and his country; and notwithstanding the remonstrances of his faithful counsellor Kennedy, who pointed out the hazard of trusting to the promises of a deadly foe and a Pagan, he fell into the snare. Leaving the government of the kingdom to Kennedy, he set out soon after for the court of Sitricus, accompanied by a splendid retinue of eighty young nobles of Munster, among whom was Dunchan, the son of Kennedy, to ratify the treaty in person, and solemnize his marriage.

Sitricus had communicated his intentions to his wife, who was a native of Ireland; and she, either from personal regard for Callaghan, whom she had known when his captive at Waterford, or from the higher motive of love of coun-

try, sent him secret information of the treacherous design, as soon as he arrived in the neighbourhood of Dublin. The king of Munster now saw his folly and imprudence when it was too late; for Sitricus, lest his devoted prey should escape his toils, had placed bodies of Danish soldiers in ambush for a considerable distance along the road, who, when Callaghan attempted to retrace his steps, completely cut off his retreat. His valour, however, and that of his brave nobles, was almost roused to madness by this act of perfidy; and near Kilmainham, this small but gallant band rushed upon their treacherous assailants with such irresistible fury, that the Danes must have been exterminated, had they not received strong reinforcements from the city. Still the nobles of Munster fought around their sovereign, till almost every man had ceased to breathe, and then Callaghan with his young friend Dunchan were led in triumph into Dublin, having stipulated that they should be treated as prisoners of war.

The perfidious Sitricus now finding that he

was prevented by the law of nations from putting his victims to death, threatened to send them to Armagh, and from thence to Norway, unless the cities of Limerick, Cashel, Waterford, and Cork were put into his hands, and a fine or eric paid for every Danish soldier killed by the troops of Munster. Callaghan immediately despatched one of his domestics to Kennedy to acquaint him with his situation, and the exorbitant demands which were made for his ransom; commanding him, at the same time, whatever the event might be, not to comply with them, but to send his General Donogh, with as powerful a force as he could collect, to Armagh, to rescue him from the hands of his enemies. The prudent Kennedy was already prepared for an event which he had foreseen; and he immediately despatched a strong naval force of seventy ships, under Failbhe Fionn, prince of Desmond, against Dundalk, where the Danish fleet lay; and at the same time Donogh Mac Keeffe, chieftain of Fermoy, marched through Connaught to Armagh, at the head of several thousand chosen troops.

When Sitricus was informed of these movements, he marched with his main force to Dundalk, and hurrying Callaghan and Dunchan on board a ship, tied them to the mast. In the mean time the Munster army reached Armagh, which they took by storm, putting the whole garrison to the sword, and then pursued the main body of the Danes to Dundalk. But when they came within view of the town, they were filled with consternation to find that their king was a prisoner on board the enemy's fleet, which was now completely beyond their reach. Their despair, however, was soon converted into hope and exultation, when they beheld the Munster ships enter the bay, and the Irish admiral quickly alongside that of the Danish general. Failbhe Fionn instantly boarded his antagonist sword in hand, and, filled with indignation at the sight of his captive sovereign, he rushed with irresistible fury through blood and slaughter, to cut the cords which bound him and Dunchan to the mast; and after hurrying them on board his own ship, returned to finish the victory which he had so gloriously

begun. But he speedily fell a sacrifice in the cause of his country, and Sitricus cutting off his head, exposed it under the impression that it would strike his antagonists with terror and dismay. It had, however, an opposite effect; for, Fingall, the second in command, excited to fury by the death of his brave admiral, renewed the combat, resolved to conquer or die. A most sanguinary conflict now ensued, but the vast superiority of the Danes left the brave Irish faint prospects of ultimate success. At this moment of despair, Fingall, being a powerful man, adopted a means of securing the victory, for which we have scarcely a parallel in history. Having singled out Sitricus, he suddenly rushed on him, grasped him in his arms, and threw himself with him into the sea, where they both perished. Two other Irish chieftains, fired by this example, jumped overboard with Tor and Magnus, the brothers of Sitricus, in their arms, and the Danes, appalled by such heroism and the loss of their commanders, gave way on every side, and were routed with prodigious slaughter.

Callaghan, after his singular deliverance, led his victorious troops back to Munster, where he was joyfully received by Kennedy, his faithful viceroy, and his people. He instantly proposed to root out the treacherous foreigners who still remained in his dominions ; at least so to weaken them as that they might not be able to do him further injury. He committed the chief command of his army to Kennedy, the king of Thomond, who, with his warlike sons Mahon and the afterwards celebrated Brien Boiromhe, then in his 16th year, defeated them in several actions ; and Limerick being at that time the strong hold of the Danes of Munster, Callaghan, in the year 943, advanced against that city at the head of a numerous army. The Danes, under the command of Amlave, their chief, marched out of the city to give battle to the Irish forces, and a fierce engagement was fought at a place now called Singland. It was long contested, (fire-arms not being known in those days) by discharges of stones from the slings of the light troops, followed by flights of arrows and lances, while the heavy armed warriors fought breast

to breast with their swords, skeyns, and pole-axes. At length the Danish chief fell by the hand of the brave Callaghan, while O'Sullivan, a distinguished Irish leader, slew Moran, a son of the king of Denmark; and the death of their generals so dispirited the foreigners, that they gave way on every side, and were pursued to the walls of Limerick with prodigious slaughter. The victors entered the city with them, pell mell; but as the Danish merchants were considered serviceable to the country, they permitted them to retain possession of the place, after exacting vast contributions in gold and merchandize.

Callaghan lived for several years after this event in great tranquillity; and his successor having been assassinated after a short reign of two years, Mahon, king of Thomond, son of the famous Kennedy, was called to the throne of Munster. The Danes were, at this time, again becoming troublesome to the natives; fresh reinforcements from their own country, enabling them to harass the neighbourhood of their strong holds by predatory incursions. In

one of these, the king of Leinster and his children were taken prisoners, while the Danes of Limerick greatly ravaged the kingdom of Connaught, plundered and murdered many of the inhabitants, and destroyed all the churches and religious houses in their progress. But the kings that reigned at that time in Ireland, were wise and brave men, and they adopted such vigorous measures as greatly crippled the power of this cruel enemy. Congall, the Supreme Monarch, defeated them at a place called Mune-Bregan, with the loss of seven thousand men. Niall, the king of Ulster, gained another victory over them near Armagh, which they had so often pillaged; while in Munster the warlike Mahon checked every attempt which they made to regain their former superiority. Indeed so little were the native Irish terrified, at this time, by these once dreaded foreigners, that we are told when a numerous body of Danes marched to Roscrea, (which was then a considerable town, and a bishop's see) for the purpose of carrying off all the goods and merchandize which were exhibited at a

fair that was then held there, the merchants and the towns-people defended their property with such bravery, that the enemy fled, after losing a great number of men.

But after Mahon had reigned for eight years with great honor and success, Muiris, the king of the Danes of Limerick, formed a confederacy with his countrymen at Waterford and Cork, and they collected an army which they hoped would be sufficient to overthrow the king of Munster. They accordingly invaded his territories on every side; but the warlike Mahon vigorously repulsed them, and assisted by his brother Brian, he brought them to a general action at Sulchoid, near Pallas, in the county of Limerick. We have no farther particulars of this engagement than that the Danes were totally discomfited, and that the victorious Irish pursued them to Limerick, where they found immense plunder of jewels, gold, and rich merchandize, and then set fire to the town. The valiant Mahon did not long survive this victory, for while on a visit at the house of O'Donovan, a chieftain of Kenry, he

was treachously seized by O'Mahony, prince of Oneachach, who conveyed him to the mountains of Mussin near Macroom, where he was basely murdered, as it is supposed, by the instigation of the Danes who had so often felt the force of his sword.

CHAPTER. V.

Brien Boiromhe—Victories over the Danes—Wise Government—Becomes Supreme Monarch—Battle of Clontarf.

On the death of Mahon, his brother Brien was chosen to succeed him on the throne of Munster; and as he is generally acknowledged to have been one of the most accomplished warriors and statesmen that Ireland has ever produced, I shall relate to you all the particulars of his history which I have been able to collect. He was born in the year 926, and his father Kennedy, observing his extraordinary endowments, took particular care of his education. He made his first essay in the art of war, when he had scarcely arrived at his fourteenth

year, under his gallant father; and shared in all the subsequent triumphs gained by him and his elder brother over the enemies of his country. He ascended the throne of Munster in his forty-third year, and by the first act of his reign, took signal vengeance on the murderers of his brother. The traitor O'Mahony had on this occasion, called fifteen hundred Danes to his assistance; but king Brien pursued him so quickly into his fastnesses, that he slew him with his own hand, and exterminated the greater part of his followers and auxiliaries.

These hostilities were scarcely terminated when a new enemy appeared in the person of Donald, prince of the Decies, who having also formed an unnatural alliance with the destroyers of his country, ravaged with fire and sword the territories of the king of Munster. But his triumph was short-lived; his army being routed with great slaughter, and pursued to Waterford, (then inhabited by the Danes,) which was plundered and burnt by the victorious Brien. He now turned his arms against his Irish and Danish tributaries in Leinster who

had revolted, and after defeating them in a pitched battle with the loss of five thousand men, pursued them even to the walls of Dublin.

Having given this signal blow to the power of the foreigners, he returned to Munster ; and landing on the island of Inniscattery, which was then a great depôt for their merchandize, he put the whole garrison to the sword. He then sailed up to Limerick, which having speedily surrendered, he confided the government of the city henceforth to Irish magistrates, but permitted the Danish merchants to reside there, on condition of sending annually to his palace of Kincora near Killaloe, a stipulated supply of wine.

Donald O'Neill, the supreme monarch, was also at this time, engaged in active hostilities with the Danes of Dublin ; but, wearied of the pomp and cares of royalty, he abdicated the throne in the twenty-fourth year of his reign ; and ended his days as a monk at a convent in Armagh. His successor, Malachy II. gave early promise of a vigorous government, by

defeating the Danes at the battle of Tarah; and then in conjunction with the king of Ulster, he laid siege to Dublin, where the remnant of the defeated army had taken refuge. As in those early times artillery was unknown, the walls of fortified places were not so strong as they are at present; and the successful attack or defence of a fortress depended chiefly on the courage and activity of the soldiers. In these qualities the Irish now shewed that they were not deficient, for three days after they had entered their entrenchments, they assaulted the city on every side; and although the Danes made a desperate resistance, the flag of the besiegers was soon planted on the ramparts. The city immediately surrendered, and the allies had the great satisfaction of liberating the king of Leinster and his family, who had been confined there for a great number of years.—Malachy with great moderation spared the lives of the garrison, and the Danish commanders engaged that they would abandon all their conquests eastward of the Shannon, refrain

in future from hostile incursions, and pay to the supreme monarch a large annual tribute.

The sovereign of Munster was at this time assisting the king of Connaught to repel an inroad of the common enemy in his territories, when Malachy ungenerously took advantage of his absence to penetrate into Thomond, where he devastated the country with fire and sword; and even cut down the tree at Magh Adair, under whose branches the Munster kings were always inaugurated. Brien speedily returned and chased the invader from his kingdom; and this laid the foundation of the subsequent animosities between the two princes.

The power of the Danes was now so completely crushed in Munster, by the valour and activity of the heroic Brien, that he had leisure to enter upon the nobler task of repairing the injuries which his kingdom had suffered, and reforming such abuses as still existed in the state. For he had never engaged in war merely for the sake of what the world calls glory, or to aggrandize himself at the expense of his

neighbours, but to protect his subjects from unjust aggression, and to deliver them from the hateful yoke of a race of foreigners who had long sought by force or artifice to rivet their chains on the people of Ireland. Some years of tranquillity which now ensued, enabled him to carry his patriotic design into effect, and he soon established a character as a legislator equally high with that which he had acquired as a warrior. Having assembled all the nobility, clergy, and principal men at Cashel, he, with their concurrence, expunged all the corruptions which had crept into the established laws of his kingdom, and made many new regulations for its better government, and for the promotion of religion and learning. He restored the lands which had been usurped by the Danes to their original proprietors, and to preserve the genealogies more accurately, he ordained that surnames should be adopted by all the principal families, a practice which now, for the first time, became prevalent throughout Europe. To encourage trade and commerce, he permitted the Danish merchants,

(who had generally embraced Christianity) to inhabit the different sea-ports; but all the Pagan Danes were expelled from the kingdom. With these enactments his subsequent proceedings fully corresponded. Governors were appointed over every city, and over each of the districts into which the country was divided. The ruined churches, monasteries, and colleges were re-edified, and established on their former foundations. Bridges were erected and roads constructed wherever they were necessary, and the laws were so vigorously executed and respected, that (as we are told by the historians,) a young lady, adorned with the richest jewels, might travel alone without danger from one end of the kingdom to the other.

But these efforts of the king of Munster to promote the best interests of the country were not imitated by the monarch of Ireland, who by the splendor of his early achievements, had excited in the minds of the people strong hopes of a vigorous and prosperous reign. He had for some time given himself up to a life of

pleasure ; and while the common enemy continued their devastations on his subjects, and those of the provincial kings, his allies, he passed his time in inglorious ease. From one end of the island to the other his conduct was contrasted with the magnanimous wisdom and activity of the king of Munster, and about the year 1001, the states of Connaught and Munster held a convention in which it was resolved to adopt immediate measures for deposing the inactive and pusillanimous Malachy, and conferring on Brien the sovereignty of Ireland. The latter having consented to this arrangement, ambassadors were despatched to Tarah, demanding the monarch's abdication for the causes above mentioned ; but Malachy, on this occasion, resumed his former dignity, and declared that he would maintain his right to the last extremity.

King Brien, determined to avail himself of the just popularity which his signal services had acquired, now marched to Tarah at the head of a numerous army drawn from the provinces of Munster and Connaught, and a part

of Leinster, having previously despatched a herald to Malachy, demanding the resignation of his crown, or otherwise that he would commence immediate hostilities. Alarmed at the vigour and force of his enemy, the king of Ireland acknowledged that he was in no condition to meet him in battle, but he solicited from the generosity of his antagonist a month to collect his forces; at the expiration of which time, he would either accept his challenge, or if his subjects refused to support him he would comply with the alternative of resigning his crown. Brien magnanimously agreeing to these conditions, Malachy employed this interval in soliciting aid from the kings and princes of Ulster and Connaught, to whom he made the most flattering promises; but these chieftains, anxious to see the crown transferred to a man more capable of protecting them, received his message with coldness, pointed out the folly of contending with the king of Munster, and advised him to submission. With this counsel the mortified monarch now found himself under the necessity of complying, and

on the appointed day, he proceeded with an escort of twelve hundred horse to the camp of Brien, by whom he was received with all the honour due to his rank. He there abdicated the crown of Ireland, which he declared he was compelled to do, not by want of courage to defend it, but by the treachery of his allies. Brien was now proclaimed supreme monarch and crowned at Tarah, after which he assigned to Malachy his old inheritance as king of Meath, and made to him and his retinue many rich presents.

Brien Boiromhe was in his 76th year when he ascended the throne of Ireland, yet he still combined all the vigour of youth with the wisdom acquired by long experience. With the exception of a few partizan chiefs of the late sovereign, his authority was universally acknowledged; but these malcontents were soon brought to submission by the valour and activity of prince Mortogh, the monarch's eldest son, who also vigorously repressed some fresh insurrectionary movements of the Danes. Tranquillity being thus completely established,

Brien commenced the great work of extending to the whole island those advantages of which Munster had already partaken, and in every quarter the disorder and misery which so lately prevailed, gave place to happiness and civilization: property was respected, religion venerated, and literature, with the arts of peace, encouraged. At his palace of Kincora, near Limerick, where he still kept his court, a magnificent hospitality was maintained; and here the great and the learned both of his own and foreign nations were constant guests.

When Brien had reigned nearly twelve years in glory and tranquillity, an unexpected incident called him once more to the field of battle, where he terminated a long and useful life by an heroic death. Malmordha Mac Murrogh, king of Leinster, whose sister the monarch had married, while on a visit at the palace of Kincora, had a quarrel with prince Mortogh, the particulars of which are thus related by our historians. While Mortogh was playing a game of chess with one of his cousins, Mal-

mordha, looking on, advised a move which lost Mortogh the game. The latter, vexed at this impertinent interposition, observed, that if the king of Leinster had given as good advice to his allies the Danes, they would not have lost the battle of Glen-madma where their defeat was owing to him. The king of Leinster sharply replied, that if the Danes had been defeated through his advice, he would soon put them in a way to retrieve their loss, and take vengeance on him and his father; to which Mortogh sternly answered, that he feared nothing from the foreigners though commanded by the king of Leinster himself. On the following day, Malmordha secretly withdrew from the court meditating revenge, and he proclaimed the circumstances of his quarrel with prince Mortogh with such exaggerations, that the states of Leinster consented to unite with the Danes in carrying on a vigorous war against the Irish monarch; and thus basely did Malmordha ally himself with the deadly enemies of his country to avenge an insult which he himself had provoked. At his request

the king of Denmark sent over a fresh reinforcement of twelve thousand men, who, when joined by the Danes of Dublin and the Leinster forces, encamped on the plains of Clontarf, (then called Cluon-Tarbhe,) within two miles of that city, the whole forming an army exceeding thirty thousand men. Malmordha now proclaimed war against the king of Ireland, and challenged him to battle. The venerable monarch, though in his eighty-eighth year, determined once more to draw the sword in defence of his country and his throne; and the chiefs of Munster and Connaught flocking with eagerness to his standard, he entered Leinster early in the month of April 1014, at the head of thirty thousand men. Here the deposed Malachy, with dissembled friendship, joined him with the forces of Meath, and the whole army having reached the vicinity of Dublin, encamped near Kilmainham. As the hostile troops could not long continue tranquil so near each other, the 23d of April, which happened to be Good Friday, was fixed on for the important conflict.

Early on the morning of that day, the king of Leinster, who acted as commander-in-chief of the enemy's army, made his dispositions for battle. On the right he placed the auxiliaries, who lately arrived from Sweden and Denmark, in number 12,000, under two distinguished chiefs named Brodar and Airgiodal. The Irish Danes, consisting of an equal number, were on the left, under Sitric Mac Lodair, while Malmordha placed himself in the centre at the head of the Leinster troops. As Brien advanced, he viewed the enemy's arrangements with the eye of an experienced warrior, and made a suitable disposition of his own troops. The celebrated Dalgais (so the troops of Thomond, or North Munster, were denominated,) with Malachy and the forces of Meath, were on the left under the command of prince Mortogh and Sitric, prince of Ulster. The troops of South Munster and the Decies, were in the centre under their respective chiefs; and the right wing was composed of the forces of Connaught under their king. Having thus marshalled his army, the venerable monarch rode

through the ranks with a crucifix in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, exhorting the soldiers to perform their duty manfully in the cause of their religion and their country. He reminded them of the sufferings of their ancestors from foreign barbarians, whose perfidy and cruelty had proved, that they were strangers alike to religion and humanity; and that now their successors, aided by some traitors to their native country, looked anxiously to the result of the approaching conflict, hoping that it would enable them to renew similar scenes of devastation and cruelty. He called on them to rely upon the God of armies, in whose cause they were about to fight, and not to doubt but that he would deliver their implacable enemies into their hands.

The heroic veteran now proceeded towards the centre to lead the troops to action; but the chiefs unanimously declaring that his extreme age forbade his further exertions in the field, he reluctantly resigned the command to his son prince Mortogh, and retired to his tent. At eight in the morning the signal being made for

the dreadful onset, the brave Dalgais rushed forward to attack the enemy's right wing, consisting of the Danes under Brodar and Airgiodal; but at this moment the treacherous Malachy abandoned the field with his Meathian forces, leaving his gallant countrymen to contend with an enemy nearly two to one. Prince Mortogh observing the flight of his perfidious ally, exclaimed, "Be not discouraged, my brave Dalgais, at the loss of these traitors, who have thus left you the unrivalled glory of vanquishing the enemy without their aid—On to victory!" With gallant hearts the summons was obeyed, and the battle soon raged in every quarter of the field; for while the Dalgais assailed the foreign auxiliaries on the enemy's right, the troops of South Munster attacked the apostate Malmordha in the centre, and the king of Connaught assailed the Danes of Leinster. As the situation of the ground admitted of no manœuvring, they fought man to man, and breast to breast—the sword, the battle-axe, and the dagger were wielded on both sides with dreadful effect, and the victors of one moment,

were the victims of the next! All depended on dauntless courage and strength of arm, and never were those martial qualities more signally displayed than on this eventful day. Innumerable were the instances of individual heroism, amongst which the exploits of the gallant Mortogh and his friend the prince of Ulster were eminently conspicuous. They had frequently to retire from the work of slaughter to an adjoining brook to slake their thirst and cool their hands, which were swelled by the incessant use of the sword and battle-axe. At one time, two Danish chiefs named Carolus and Conmaol rushed together on prince Mortogh, but they both fell by his arm: at another, perceiving a large body of Danes under Sitric Mac Lodair rushing on the Dalgais, he singled out their leader, and with a blow of his battle-axe cut him in two.

The battle raged with undiminished fury till four in the afternoon, when the Danes deprived of their principal leaders, were no longer able to withstand the reiterated charges of the Irish troops, and fled on every side. But at the

moment when victory crowned his heroic exertions, the gallant Mortogh received his death wound. While in eager pursuit of the flying foe, he was assailed by a Danish prince, named Henry. His right hand and arm being at this time so swelled and painful that he was unable to lift them up, he seized his antagonist with the left, and shaking him out of his coat of mail, threw him prostrate on the ground—then placing the pummel of his sword against his own breast he mortally wounded the Dane, by pressing the weight of his body on the sword. But the latter, in his dying agonies, seized the dagger which hung by the side of his conqueror, with which he gave him a deadly lunge, and on the following day the heroic Mortogh expired.

The aged monarch passed the day in his tent, anxiously listening to the details which were brought to him by his aides-du-camp of the progress of the battle, and at intervals imploring the blessing of heaven on the arms of his country. Corcoran, one of his attendants, perceiving the flag of prince Mortogh struck, which

notified the fall of the chief, supposed that the Irish army had been defeated; and entering the royal tent, on his knees he implored his revered sovereign to mount his horse and fly. "No," replied the veteran, "I came here to die or conquer, and my enemies shall not boast of my death by inglorious wounds; but let you and my other attendants hasten your escape, and announce, that I bequeath my soul to God, my body to Armagh, and my blessing to Denis O'Brien. Proceed this night to Swords of Colum-cille, and let the clergy come for my body to-morrow, convey it to Duleek, and thence to Louth, and let the archbishop of Armagh, successor to St. Patrick, accompanied by his clergy come thither for my remains." While he yet spoke the officer exclaimed, "I perceive a body of men advancing towards us." "What sort of men are they?" asked the monarch. "Grey, naked looking men," answered Corcoran. "They are Danes completely armed," observed Brien, and instantly grasped his sword. At the next moment the troop, with Brodar at their head, rushed into

the royal tent. The aged monarch drew his sword, and with the vigour of youth cut off Brodar's left leg from the knee; but almost at the same instant he received a deadly blow from the battle-axe of his antagonist. Though he felt that the wound was mortal, the hero summoned up all his dying energies, and with two strokes of his well-tried sword, slew the Danish leader and one of his followers, and then expired himself, falling like Leonidas or Epaminondas, a sacrifice in the cause of his country, and grasping victory even in death.

This sad event had scarcely occurred when the brave prince of Ulster, eager in pursuit of Brodar's troop, rushed into the royal tent, and cut the remnant of them to pieces. But the sight of the lifeless body of the venerable monarch was more than his exhausted strength could bear. He threw himself upon it—his numerous wounds burst forth afresh, and refusing all assistance, the gallant Sitric breathed his last in the arms of his friend and faithful ally.

Thus fell the illustrious Brien Boiromhe, a name that will ever be considered the glory of

Ireland. Sagacious, humane, pious, valiant, and munificent, he merits a distinguished rank amongst those sovereigns who have been the benefactors, not the scourges of mankind. He conquered as much by the splendour of a character, acquired by his philanthropic acts, as by his great military achievements. His bodily endowments and mental powers were of the very first order, and he was at once the hero and the lawgiver of his country. Besides the illustrious monarch, his eldest son, and the prince of Ulster, many of the Irish chiefs, among whom were Conaing, the nephew of king Brien, and Methlin, prince of the Decies, fell on this sanguinary day, and their fate was shared by more than five thousand of their followers. Of the Danes and their Leinster auxiliaries, eleven thousand are said to have perished, including the traitor Malmordha and two sons of the king of Denmark. The battle of Clontarf proved the deathblow of their political power in Ireland; but that this and the other wise and vigorous acts of king Brien's reign, did not prove more lastingly

beneficial to his country, must be attributed to the character of the age in which he lived, and the faulty nature of the Irish government.

Malachy II. notwithstanding his treachery at the battle of Clontarf, was now restored to the supreme monarchy, and for eight years he wielded the sceptre with considerable vigour. In the mean time Donogh, the son of the late monarch, meeting considerable opposition to his claim on the crown of Munster, repaired to Germany, where he commanded a chosen corps of the Dalgais in the service of the emperor. On the death of Malachy in 1022, he laid claim to the throne of Ireland; but he found a powerful opponent in Turlogh, the son of his elder brother, and for the space of nearly forty years, the lives and properties of the unhappy people were sacrificed to the caprice or vengeance of these competitors. Donogh being ultimately vanquished, fled to Rome in the anguish of disappointed ambition, and is said to have laid his crown at the feet of the holy pontiff; and upon this donation, Pope Adrian is supposed to have founded his subsequent grant of the

kingdom of Ireland to Henry II. Donogh afterwards assumed the habit of a monk, and ended his days in the abbey of St. Stephen at Rome.

Turlogh reigned for thirty years after the flight of his rival; and as far as the distraction of the times would permit, endeavoured to imitate the example of his grandfather, king Brien; so that the fame of his wise government has received ample testimony, not only from native, but foreign writers. On his death, in 1094, new political storms were engendered by the competition of Mortogh, son of the late monarch, and Donald O'Neill, the sovereign of Ulster. For more than twenty years they held divided sway; the former being acknowledged by the Southern, and the latter by the Northern half of the island. At the close of that period, Turlogh, the young king of Connaught, offered himself as a new competitor for the crown and ultimately succeeded; Turlogh O'Brien retiring in 1121 to a convent at Armagh, while Donald died in two years after. The reign of Turlogh O'Connor which

lasted thirty-five years, was a scene of constant warfare with Mortogh the son of the late monarch, Donald O'Neill, the remnant of the Danes, and the naval power of Scotland. His son, Roderick O'Connor, continued the contest; and being at length left without a rival, became the last monarch of Ireland in 1166. Great unanimity appeared to prevail among the states at his inauguration; and at a general assembly which he held at Athboy in the county of Meath, in the second year of his reign, besides the trains of all the provincial kings, princes, and prelates, thirteen thousand horsemen were numbered.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISH INVASION.

King Henry II.—Dermod Mac Murchard, King of Leinster — Roderick O'Connor—Robert Fitz-Stephen—Surrender of Wexford—Defeat of the Prince of Ossory—Maurice Fitz-Gerald—Imbecile conduct of Roderick O'Connor —Raymond le Gross—Battle of Don-Isle.

While you were reading the foregoing accounts of the sufferings which the people of Ireland endured by the cruel inroads of the Danes, as well as by their own intestine divisions; you were, no doubt, sometimes surprized that their powerful neighbours, the English, did not take advantage of the weakness thus occasioned, to obtain possession of the island. But this surprize will cease, when you recollect, that England herself had suffered

much from the same causes. During the Saxon Heptarchy, it contained seven different kingdoms, continually at war with each other; and the Danes at one time got complete possession of the country, and held it till near the arrival of William the Conqueror. From the Norman Conquest, it was, that England, under a powerful and settled government, began to acquire that strength which flows alone from union, and which, notwithstanding her various revolutions, has raised her to the rank of one of the chief states of Europe. The English, until about two centuries before this period, appear to have been little acquainted with the value of our island, though the fame of Irish valour was sometimes spread through England by the part which our countrymen took in the contests of Wales; and the Irish warriors who accompanied the sons of Harold into England, in their futile attempt to overthrow the government of William the Conqueror, encouraged the cupidity of many of the great lords by the splendid accounts which they gave of their native country.

But such were the distractions of England during the reigns of the early Norman kings, that no thought of conquering Ireland, appears to have been entertained by any of them till Henry II. ascended the throne with an undisputed title. That ambitious and politic prince eagerly listened to the counsels of his courtiers on this subject, and in 1156, solicited the sanction of Pope Adrian to his design, assigning as his principal motive, the pious wish of reforming the dreadful state of corruption, both in religion and morals, in which the inhabitants of Ireland were sunk; and his anxious desire to establish the kingdom of God in that unhappy country. On condition of receiving the approbation of his Holiness, Henry promised to reduce the country to obedience to the Holy See, and to pay a yearly tribute to St. Peter from the kingdom of Ireland, which has been usually called Peter's Pence. It is easy to perceive that Henry put forward these reasons, merely to gain the good will of the Pope; but he had objects in undertaking this expedition

of greater importance to himself and his dominions. There is little doubt but king Henry was at this time much alarmed lest Ireland should be occupied by some other power, as Magnus, king of Norway, after conquering the Orkneys and the Isle of Man, had already made an attempt on this country, where the Danes, or Ostmen, as they were sometimes called, still kept possession of the principal sea-ports.—Henry knew well that should one of the Northern Potentates, possessing as they did, a great number of ships and good seamen, get possession of this valuable island, they would render it a dangerous neighbour to his dominions.

Pope Adrian listened very willingly to this proposal of king Henry, as, according to a very ancient book called the Annals of the Four Masters, O'Halloran, and other respectable Roman Catholic writers, Ireland had not till very lately submitted to the supremacy of Rome, her own prelates having previously exercised all ecclesiastical authority. The Danes of Ireland, after their conversion to Christianity, had set the example, by sending

their bishops to be consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury; and in 1152, Cardinal Paparon, legate from Pope Eugene III. assembled the Irish clergy at a synod in Drogheda, where he conferred palls, blessed by the Pope, on the archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam; and the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland were adjusted according to the system of the church of Rome. Adrian, therefore, ready to embrace this opportunity of at once securing the papal authority which had been so recently established in this country, and conciliating the friendship of so powerful a monarch as the king of England, granted a Bull to Henry, in which he highly complimented him for his pious wishes to enlarge the borders of the church; and, as his Holiness declared that Ireland and all other islands on which the Sun of Righteousness had shone, belonged of right to the jurisdiction of St. Peter and of the Holy Roman See, he gave the king full authority to enter into the island of Ireland to extend the borders of the church, for the restraining of vice, the correction of

manners, the planting of virtue, and the increase of religion. He commanded the people of that land to reverence him as their lord, and a ring accompanied the Bull as a token of Henry's investiture as the rightful sovereign of Ireland.

When you have read what I am now going to relate, you will be surprised how such a handful of invaders should have established the power of England so effectually in this extensive country, as to bid defiance to every effort of the natives for many hundred years after to root it out. You are not, however, to suppose that this arose from the superior courage of the English; for in this respect the two nations have always been acknowledged to be pretty equal; but it originated solely from the nature of the government, which, as I frequently told you before, created such jealousies, dissensions, and civil strife, among the different petty states, as continually retarded the strength and prosperity of the country, and thus rendered her an easy prey to every successive invader. Nor in such a state of things could domestic traitors ever be wanted to aid

the projects of the foreign enemy. The state of Ireland was at this period peculiarly disorganized. The authority of the monarch had become little more than nominal, the provincial chiefs, considering themselves rather his allies than his subjects. The family of O'Neill exercised an hereditary jurisdiction over Ulster. The government of Munster was divided between the descendants of Brien Boiromhe, now reduced to their original kingdom of North Munster, which was sometimes called Thomond, or Limerick, and the Mac Arthys, who were kings of Cork and Desmond, or South Munster. In Connaught, the O'Connors were sovereigns of the eastern territory, while O'Ruarc, prince of Breffney, governed in Leitrim and the adjoining districts. Another branch of the O'Neills ruled Meath; while Dermod Mac Murchard was king of Leinster, having under his authority the princes of Ossory and the Decies, and the remnant of the Danes still inhabiting Dublin and Waterford.

King Henry would, probably, have undertaken his expedition to Ireland immediately on

receiving the Pope's authority, but that he was engaged in a war with France, and had serious disputes with Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, which are copiously detailed in the History of England. And, perhaps, he might never have attempted the conquest of Ireland, but for new quarrels which rose amongst some of her principal chieftains. The origin of the dispute is thus related by our Irish historians. You will recollect that Dermod Mac Murchard, was at that time king of Leinster. His great stature, bodily strength, and boisterous valour rendered him a particular favorite with the common people, while his munificence to the church equally recommended him to the clergy: but his pride and tyranny caused him to be detested by the inferior chieftains, and he was so destitute of any steadiness of principle, that he alternately attached himself to the various factions which distracted the country, as it suited his own selfish policy. During the long contests between the families of O'Neill and O'Connor for the supreme government of Ireland, Dermod supported the

former. In the year 1154, about sixteen years before the English invasion, he led an army into the territories of O'Ruarc, prince of Breffney, who was a partisan of the O'Connors, and chased him from his dominions. Having long entertained an unlawful passion for Dervorghil, the wife of O'Ruarc, who was a princess of Meath, he availed himself of this opportunity to gratify it; and having obtained possession of the lady by the assistance of a base brother; she, with affected reluctance, accompanied him to Leinster. O'Ruarc complained of this outrage to Turlogh O'Connor, the reigning monarch, who avenged it by ravaging Leinster and rescuing the princess of Breffney from her paramour. A sanguinary warfare was now kept up between the king of Leinster and O'Ruarc for several years, with alternate success, till the accession of Roderick, whose vigorous preparations for the invasion of Leinster so terrified Dermod, that he set fire to Ferns, his capital city. His apprehensions were speedily realized when the monarch, accompanied by O'Ruarc, entered his territo-

ries, and Dermod endured the usual fate of tyrants in being deserted by his subjects. The prince of Ossory joined his enemies, and when the chief of the O'Byrnes of Wicklow was prevailed on by the clergy to hold an interview with the fallen prince, he treated him with the haughtiness of a superior, and commanded him to depart as he regarded his personal safety.

Defeated and degraded, Dermod now resolved to seek the means of vengeance in a foreign land, which his crimes forbade him to expect in his own. Accompanied by about sixty of his friends he embarked for Bristol, where he was cordially received by the clergy, and hospitably entertained in the monastery of the Augustines, to whom he made such a representation of his sufferings and the malice of his enemies, that he was generally regarded as an object of respect and the deepest commiseration. Learning that king Henry was then in France, he set out in a few days for that country, and meeting the English monarch at Acquitain, he fell at his feet, pathetically depicted his misfortunes, and the treachery of his

subjects; and appealing to Henry's magnanimity and generosity in the most forcible language, declared that if he should by his powerful assistance restore him to his dominions, he would hold them in vassalage of him and his heirs, and ever acknowledge the king of England as his liege Lord.

The affairs of Henry were at this time too much perplexed to permit him openly to espouse the cause of the king of Leinster: but he was, at the same time, unwilling to miss so fair an opportunity of taking some step towards the accomplishment of a project which he had so long meditated. He entertained Dermod for some days with all the respect becoming his rank; accepted his terms of allegiance; made him magnificent presents, and dismissed him with a letter of credence to all his subjects, declaring that he had granted his royal grace and protection to the king of Leinster, and assured his free license and favour to any of them who might be disposed to aid him in the recovery of his territory.

Dermod returned to England, highly elated

at the favourable reception he had met from king Henry; and at Bristol he published the royal letter, and made the most flattering promises to all who should assist him in the recovery of his dominions. But a month having elapsed without any prospect of succour, he was about to abandon his project in despair, when he was advised to apply to Richard, earl of Chepstow, (afterwards better known by the name of Strongbow, because of his great skill in archery,) who was the son of Gilbert, Earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of the illustrious house of Clare. Strongbow, as I shall call this celebrated man, was not more distinguished by his high rank than by his military genius; and his generosity and courtesy had gained him the affections of a powerful train of followers. But having, by his profusion, dissipated his fortune, and being for some cause estranged from the royal favour, he now lived in retirement in Wales, and it was believed that the circumstances in which he was placed would incline him to listen to the overtures of the exiled chieftain. These,

however, were at first received by Strongbow with great coldness and reserve, which were not overcome till Dermod covenanted, that on the recovery of his dominions he would give him his daughter Eva in marriage, and make him heir to his kingdom. On these conditions Strongbow engaged to transport a considerable force into Ireland in the ensuing spring, provided he could obtain the king's particular license and approbation.

Having thus far succeeded in his object, Dermod resolved to return privately to Ireland, and prepare for the reception of his ally, by collecting his adherents. At St. David's he met with some new partisans, through the friendship of the bishop. These were Maurice Fitz-Gerald, a lord of distinguished worth and valour, and his maternal brother, Robert Fitz-Stephen, who had formerly been governor of Cardigan; to whom Dermod engaged to cede the town of Wexford, with a large adjoining territory, as soon as he should be restored to his dominions. Some other Welch knights, hoping, should the adventure prove successful,

to make advantageous settlements for themselves, agreed also to embark in the enterprize; and Dermod, filled with the most sanguine hopes, returned to Ireland.

When he arrived at Ferns, he gave the clergy flattering accounts of his reception by king Henry; and, no doubt, greatly exaggerated the force of his English confederates. He remained concealed in the Abbey of Ferns for some time, waiting the arrival of his auxiliaries; but the zeal of his friends, the clergy, so circulated the report of his rising fortune, that numbers of his adherents flocked to Ferns; and being forced peremptorily to put himself at their head, he took possession of a part of his dominions, called Hy-Kinsellagh. When intelligence of this event, and of the near approach of a foreign invasion, reached the ears of the monarch Roderick, he suddenly collected some troops, and, with his faithful associate, O'Ruarc, marched into Hy-Kinsellagh. Terrified at their approach, Dermod fled into the woods, and, conscious of his own weakness, found it necessary to temporize till the

arrival of his expected auxiliaries. He accordingly made professions to Roderick, of the most abject submission, — formally renounced his claim to the government of Leinster, requesting only, as an object of compassion, to be allowed a certain portion of land, which he promised to hold in absolute dependence upon the Irish monarch. He offered hostages as a security for his obedience, and to give O'Ruarc one hundred ounces of gold, (equal to at least ten thousand pounds of our present money,) as an inducement to bury all old animosities in oblivion. If Roderick had acted with becoming vigour upon this occasion, he might have speedily extinguished the hopes of Dermod; but as the regulation of some disorders which at that time prevailed in Meath and North Munster, appeared to him of more importance, he fell into the snare which his adversary had laid for him, and agreed to all his conditions.

In the mean time, the agents whom the king of Leinster had left in Wales, were actively engaged in equipping an armament for the invasion of Ireland, which, at the present day,

would appear to have been very inadequate to the undertaking. It was, however, several months before it could be accomplished; but at length, on the 1st of May, 1170, Robert Fitz Stephen, David Barry, and Hervey of Mountmorres, a nephew of Strongbow, with thirty knights, sixty men at arms, well mounted, and three hundred archers, all chosen men of Wales, arrived in three ships at a little creek called Bagganbun, near Fethard, in the county of Wexford, of which the following rhyme appears in an old author :—

> "At the creeke of Bagganbun
> Irelande was lost and wonne."

This force was followed on the next day by Maurice Prendergast, at the head of ten knights and two hundred archers; and the whole adjoining country was thrown into such commotion, that the Britons for a moment felt some alarm; but this was speedily dissipated by the arrival of five hundred Irish auxiliaries, under Donald Kavanagh, Dermod's illegitimate son. These were soon followed by fresh reinforcements under the king of Leinster himself,

who now, throwing aside the mean habiliments in which he had been so long disguised, appeared in royal pomp to welcome his deliverers.

Having solemnly ratified all their former engagements, the allies commenced their operations by marching to Wexford, a considerable town, which was garrisoned by two thousand Irish and Danes,—men of the most daring but undisciplined valour. Unwilling to await the attack of their enemies, they rushed out of the town to meet it; but the spectacle of a regular, though not numerous body of men, with barbed horses and shining armour, checked their forwardness, and they returned to their fortifications, resolved to defend them to the last extremity. Encouraged by the retreat of his antagonists, Fitz-Stephen boldly led his forces up to the town, filled the trenches with armed men, and appointed his archers to level at the walls and turrets. But the garrison made a most vigorous resistance, and cast down great stones and pieces of timber on the assailants, by which eighteen were killed, and many severely wounded. One of these stones struck

David Barry, a valiant Welch knight, on the head-piece, while he was attempting to scale the walls, and he was carried away by his comrades almost lifeless.

Fitz-Stephen now perceiving that the men of Wexford were not to be so easily subdued, withdrew his forces to the sea-shore, and to convince them that he was resolved not to abandon the enterprize, he set fire to his ships. He then ordered mass to be celebrated in his camp with much solemnity, and having marshalled his army with great circumspection, he again led them towards Wexford, deeply impressed with the feeling, that nothing remained for them but to conquer or die. This bold resolution of the invaders completely appalled the garrison: when they saw the army, whom they supposed to have been utterly vanquished, again approaching, they began to consider the improbability of a successful resistance, unprovided as they were with ammunition and provisions, and feared the vengeance of their late sovereign, should the place be taken by storm. The clergy loudly encouraged those feelings,

and, at length, a deputation of the principal inhabitants, with two bishops at its head, was sent from the town, to offer terms of capitulation. To this Dermod was persuaded with difficulty to agree; but it was at length arranged, that the town should be surrendered to him—that the inhabitants should again acknowledge him as their sovereign, and that four principal citizens should become hostages for their fidelity. Dermod now took possession of the place, and immediately proved his good faith to his allies by investing Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald (whose arrival was speedily expected,) with the joint lordship of Wexford and its domains. He also granted to Hervey of Mountmorres, a large district on the coast; and here was planted the first British colony, who, even to the present day, are distinguished in many particulars from the natives, as it respects manners and language.

After this conquest, Dermod led the British forces to his residence at Ferns, where three weeks were spent in feasting the leaders and refreshing the soldiers; and here he arranged

with his allies the plan of their future operations. The king of Leinster now found himself at the head of three thousand men, besides his auxiliaries; and he resolved that Fitz-Patrick, the prince of Ossory, who in the time of his distress had revolted from him, and put his son to death, should feel the immediate effects of his vengeance. The British leaders promising him their unlimited support, he set out on this expedition, while the prince of Ossory, with five thousand men, strongly entrenched amidst woods and fastnesses, awaited the approach of his invaders. But notwithstanding these obstacles, the allies attacked the Ossorians with great impetuosity, and a sanguinary contest ensued, which lasted from morning till night. The efforts of the assailants were frequently repelled, till a manœuvre, suggested by Prendergast, induced the troops of Ossory to quit their advantageous position, and rush into the plain, when the contest was speedily decided by the superior skill and discipline of the British cavalry. But the latter, in their ardour, pursuing the fugitives too far,

soon found themselves involved in dangerous morasses, from which they were speedily obliged to retire. The prince of Ossory, attributing this retreat of the invaders to want of courage, renewed his attack, and imprudently permitted himself to be again drawn into the plain. Here superior discipline once more prevailed; the Ossorians fled on all sides, and the Irish, under Dermod, joining in the pursuit, completed their rout. A barbarous practice then prevailed of mangling the bodies of the unhappy men who fell in battle, which is now known only among the Turks. Upon this occasion, we are told that the troops of Dermod returned from the field of slaughter with three hundred heads, which they presented to their sovereign as trophies of their prowess, and this brutal chieftain, discovering among them the head of one of his most determined foes, treated it with indignities which it would be shocking to mention.

The king of Leinster now satiated his vengance by devastating Ossory with fire and sword, after which he carried his ravages into

the territories of O'Phelan, prince of the Decies, and that part of Wicklow called Glendalough. Meantime, the prince of Ossory, recovered from his panic, again appeared in arms, to defy the power of his implacable foe; for three days he gallantly repelled a fresh attempt at invasion, and at length retired from the field, though vanquished yet not subdued. An event which occurred soon after encouraged him to become the assailant in his turn. An insult which Dermod had given to Maurice Prendergast, had inspired that chieftain with the resolution of returning to Wales; but the king of Leinster adopting measures to counteract his intention, Prendergast with his whole troop, entered the service of the prince of Ossory, who encouraged by the reinforcement, made many successful inroads into the territory of his adversary, though he was restrained by the prudence of Prendergast from meeting him in the field. Meantime Maurice Fitz-Gerld arrived at Wexford with a fresh supply of British troops, consisting of ten knights, thirty horsemen, or men at arms, and one hundred

archers, which recruited the loss sustained by Prendergast's defection. The latter, also, having soon become as much disgusted with his new alliance, as he had been with that of Dermod, made another effort to return to Wales; the prince of Ossory attempted to oppose his passage by force; but his retreat being secured by the valour and address of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, Fitz-Patrick was at length compelled to offer terms of submission to his former sovereign.

The exploits of the Britons, and the success of Dermod in recovering his territories, now spread alarm throughout every part of the island. The monarch Roderick, who had at first treated the report of this puny invasion with contempt, began to entertain serious apprehensions for its consequences, and resolved before the flame should take a wider range, to march with all the force he could collect, against the king of Leinster and his foreign auxiliaries. Having summoned his vassals to his standard, he collected a considerable army at Tarah, consisting, besides his

Connaught forces, of the troops of Thomond, under Donald O'Brien, those of O'Ruarc of Breffney, and of many of the chieftains of Leinster, who were still in revolt against their sovereign. As this formidable army advanced, Dermod appeared to lose all confidence even in his British allies, and communicated his apprehensions to their leaders in the language of a man almost driven to desperation. Fitz-Stephen endeavoured to allay his fears, and assured him that the Britons were determined to share his fortunes, and to be his friends in distress as well as in prosperity; but as the approaching enemy was so superior to them in number, they resolved to retire to a station near Ferns, which being surrounded by woods, morasses, and precipices, was difficult of access; and it was in a few days so entrenched and fortified as to bid defiance to the invader.

Roderick perceiving the danger of attacking an enemy thus situated, endeavoured by negociation to divide his antagonists. He despatched a herald to Fitz-Stephen to point out the injustice of his conduct in espousing the

odious cause of a tyrant and an adulterer, and invading a country where he had no just claims or pretensions. He warned him to avoid being involved in the ruin which now menaced his insidious ally, and offered him and his soldiers a safe departure, with the expenses of their voyage. To this message Fitz-Stephen replied, that the Britons had not come to Ireland to invade the rights of others, but to take possession of their own, which they claimed by treaty with the king of Leinster, to whom they stood engaged by every tie of justice and honour—that they were at a loss to conceive the object of his deputation, for they wanted neither his advice or his friendship—if he chose to predict the event of the present contest, they had no reliance on his sagacity—if he commanded as a monarch they were strangers to his authority—and if he threatened as an enemy, they set his power at defiance.

Having failed in his attempt on Fitz-Stephen, Roderick endeavoured to impress the king of Leinster with a sense of the duty which he owed to his country. He exhorted him to

abandon the cause of the strangers before they made a permanent and powerful establishment, which might ultimately reduce the whole country under their authority. On this condition the monarch offered to re-instate him in his territories, but menaced him with the punishment of a traitor if he should persevere in his rebellious practices. This proposition was treated with as little respect as that which had been sent to the British chieftain, and for some time vigorous preparations were made on both sides to decide the question by the sword. The interval was occupied by the different leaders, to inspire the soldiers under their respective commands with courage for the expected conflict. Roderick represented the character of the king of Leinster in the most odious colours as a tyrant, who, to gratify his malice, had introduced a band of needy foreign adventurers to gain a settlement in Ireland. Dermod, on the other hand, depicted his adversary as the unprincipled and oppressive invader of his province, who had compelled him to take up arms in defence of his dearest

rights and those of his subjects: while Fitz-Stephen told his countrymen that they were engaged in an honorable contest by supporting an injured prince, their friend and benefactor, who had given them valuable settlements; and he trusted that they would now exert that valour which had ever been the glory of Britons, and which he doubted not would open a way to acquisitions still more important.

With the vastly superior force which the Irish monarch possessed he might now, by acting with vigour, have crushed in its infancy an enterprize, which by being allowed to gain strength, led to such important results; but Roderick was destitute of talents, either as a statesman or a warrior, adequate to such a crisis. After spending several days in hostile preparations, he was persuaded by his clergy to offer fresh terms to his rebellious vassal, by which he acknowledged his right to the government of Leinster, and that he would withdraw all opposition to his further progress in the reduction of his revolted subjects, on the simple condition of his acknowledging the supremacy of Ro-

derick, and yielding him the service usually paid to the monarch of Ireland by the provincial kings. Through the mediation of the clergy, Dermod accepted these conditions, and delivered his favourite son as an hostage for his faithful adherence to them; while by a secret article he engaged to dismiss his British auxiliaries immediately after the settlement of the province. But he resolved to fulfil the treaty no longer than it suited his convenience.

The Irish monarch having thus ingloriously terminated a contest for which he had made such great preparations, Dermod and his allies were left at full liberty to pursue their ambitious designs. Fitz-Stephen, suspecting the fidelity of the men of Wexford, commenced the erection of a fort at a place called Carrig, about two miles from the town, which was defended on two sides by precipices, and on the third by a navigable river. Dermod, in the mean time, assisted by a strong body of the British under Maurice Fitz-Gerald, marched to take vengeance of the citizens of Dublin, who at that period were chiefly composed of Ostmen,

for the murder of his father many years before, and their subsequent revolt against himself. As he approached the city, he committed the most horrible ravages, which so terrified the inhabitants who were totally unprepared for resistance, that they offered to return to their allegiance; and through the intercession of Fitz-Gerald, Dermod accepted their oaths of fidelity, and permitted the Danish prince, Hesculph Mac Torcall, still to govern the city as his vassal.

While the king of Leinster was thus augmenting his strength, that of the Irish monarch suffered a considerable diminution by the revolt of Donald O'Brien, the sovereign of Thomond. That chieftain had been the faithful adherent of Roderick in all his expeditions, till his late inglorious conduct led him to abandon his cause, when he entered into an alliance with Dermod, which he cemented by marrying one of his daughters. Roderick proceeded at the head of a considerable army to reduce his rebellious vassal, but Fitz-Stephen, at the request of Dermod, marched rapidly to the assistance

of the latter, and the monarch had once more to retire from inferior forces disappointed and disgraced.

This rapid career of success caused Dermod to forget the solemn engagement, which he had so recently entered into with his sovereign, and his ambition was so inflated that he resolved to contend with Roderick for the monarchy of Ireland. He communicated his design to the British leaders, who, while they applauded his spirit, dissuaded him from the attempt until he had received further reinforcements from England; and they urged him to despatch another message to Strongbow, earnestly soliciting the fulfilment of his engagement. He accordingly represented the posture of his affairs, and the prospects he had of extending his dominions, in such glowing terms to the earl, that the ambition of the latter received an additional impulse, and repairing to king Henry, he requested that he might be permitted to seek in a foreign country that return of fortune which was denied him in his own. Henry was unwilling that his subjects should

make any considerable progress in Ireland without his own personal interposition, which he was unable as yet to give—he was at the same time unwilling that they should lose the advantages which they had already gained. He appeared to treat the project of Strongbow with contempt and ridicule; but after detaining him for some days under various pretexts, he at length said, as if to get rid of his importunity, 'Lo, whither and where thou wilt go and wander from me, it shall be lawful for thee; take the wings of Dedalus, and fly away." The earl accepted this as a sufficient licence, and spent the winter in making vigorous preparations for his expedition.

In May 1171, earl Strongbow despatched Raymond le Gross, the kinsman of Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, with his advanced guard, consisting of ten knights and seventy archers, who were accompanied by Hervey of Mountmorres. This puny force landed at a place called by some writers Dondrone, and by others Don-Isle, a few miles from the city of Waterford, where Raymond, for their security,

cast up an entrenchment, and erected a temporary fort. The necessity of these precautions was soon apparent, as O'Phelan, prince of the Decies, and O'Ryan of Idrone, quickly assembled a tumultuary army of three thousand men, with which they marched against this handful of invaders. When Raymond perceived the vast superiority of the assailants, he ordered his men to retire within the fort. The Irish pressed closely upon them, and some had even entered their gates, when Raymond boldly attacked and slew their leader, whose followers instantly withdrew, and appeared quite disconcerted as to their future plan of operations. The skilful commander of the Britons took advantage of this momentary pause, to order a numerous herd of cattle which he had collected for the subsistence of his troops, to be driven against the enemy, and the animals rushed forward with such irresistible violence as threw the Irish into inextricable confusion. The invaders now sallied out of the fort, slaughtered the miserable fugitives without mercy, and returned with seventy prisoners,

all principal citizens of Waterford, who offered large sums for their ransom. Raymond pleaded forcibly for the lives of men who had fought in an honourable cause, in defence of their country; but his opinion was opposed by Hervey of Mountmorres, who argued that their destruction was necessary to strike terror into the inhabitants, who, he said, would never submit to the Britons till broken by rigour and severity. This cruel policy prevailed, and every one of these unfortunate men was cast from a rock into the sea. Sir William Ferand was the only Briton of note who fell in this singular action. Notwithstanding this act of merciless barbarity, which was well calculated to excite in the minds of the Irish an ardent desire for vengeance on their enemies, the invaders were permitted to retain possession of their strong hold, till the arrival of their associates.

CHAPTER VII.

Arrival of Strongbow—Siege of Waterford—Capture of Dublin—Synod of Armagh—Reverses snstained by Strongbow—Death of Dermod Mac Murchard—Repulse of the Danes at Dublin—Siege of Dublin by Roderick O'Connor—Brilliant Exploit of Strongbow—Capture of Fitz-Stephen—Battle of Idrone.

THE forces which the Britons had hitherto brought into Ireland, did not amount to a thousand men; yet with this trifling aid had the king of Leinster been able, not only to recover his territories, but even to set the supreme monarch at defiance; and such will always be the consequences of a weak and divided government. The Irish of that day

were not less brave than their ancestors who fought and defeated the veteran and disciplined Danes at Clontarf, as was proved in the various actions which Dermod and his British auxiliaries fought with the troops of Ossory; but they had not now a Brien Boiromhe to lead them, and the various provinces were as little united as the states of Germany in their late wars with Bonaparte. The several tribes, indeed, were alike in manners and language; but they were unconcerned about the interest of a different province, and little affected by the disgrace or defeat of any chieftain but their own. Hence the settlement of a Welch colony in Leinster, produced no alarm in the distant provinces, and the vassals of Roderick followed him to the field, not so much to repel a foreign invasion, as to crush a rebellious subject. The prudence of the early adventurers in avoiding every thing that could provoke the remote chieftains, contributed as much as their valour to their final success over a brave, but inexperienced and disunited people.

The arrival of earl Strongbow gave a new aspect to the state of affairs in Ireland. He had spent many months in collecting and equipping his followers, whom at the close of the summer, he led through Wales to Milford Haven: but just as he was on the point of embarking, he received a positive command from king Henry to desist from his enterprize on pain of being treated as a rebel. The earl, however, considering that he had proceeded too far to withdraw, affected to doubt the authority of the mandate; or at all events he resolved to trust to his good fortune, which might either render him independent of the king, or supply means for appeasing his resentment. He accordingly set sail for the port of Waterford, where he arrived on the 23d of August, with two hundred knights and twelve hundred archers; and being joined on the same day by the small force under Raymond, the whole army, on the following morning, marched to attack the city. Waterford was, at this time, chiefly inhabited by Ostmen, and was esteemed for wealth and trade only inferior to Dublin.

Situated on the southern side of the river Suir, it was then surrounded by a ditch and walls enclosing a triangular space, with fortified towers at each of the angles, one of which, named Reginald's Tower, is still in excellent preservation. On the first alarm of invasion prince Reginald, the Danish governor, prepared for a vigorous defence, and the garrison received considerable reinforcements from the neighbouring chieftains.

About mid-day on the 24th, the Britons approached the place by land and water, proudly displaying their banners. They commenced the attack with their usual gallantry; but they experienced such a determined resistance, that they were forced to retire. After a short pause they returned to the assault, but were a second time beaten off with considerable slaughter. At this moment Raymond perceived in the eastern angle a small wooden house which projected beyond the walls, and was supported by posts on the outside. He prevailed on his troops to make a third assault on this quarter, which they commenced by hewing down the posts.

the house immediately fell, and drew with it such a portion of the walls as made a practicable breach, through which the besiegers rushed into the town, and soon bore down all opposition. And now a scene of horror commenced, which, in those days was the common practice of warriors in every country. For some hours the whole city presented a sad spectacle of promiscuous plunder and carnage, in which neither age, nor rank was respected; and the Danish governor, with the prince of the Decies, and his son, would have been among the victims, had not the king of Leinster arrived at that moment; when a touch of compassion, or some other motive, influenced a heart, usually cruel, to interpose in behalf of the unfortunate captives. It is lamentable that the sacking of towns taken by storm is allowed, even by the laws of modern warfare. The necessity of this is contended for as a means of intimidation; but, surely war, in its mildest form, is sufficiently full of horrors, without making those who have never been, or by their submission, have ceased to be active enemies, its victims.

The practice is inconsistent both with reason and justice.

Dermod now joyfully embraced his grand confederate, and with an ostentation of good faith, proceeded to ratify his original covenant with Strongbow by presenting to him the princess Eva. Amidst the smoking ruins of Waterford, the nuptials were solemnized, as it is said, in Reginald's Tower; after which the allies proceeded to arrange their future operations, which Dermod was anxious in the first instance to direct against Dublin, where he had discovered some recent symptoms of disaffection. In the mean time Roderick, alarmed at the progress of the invaders, and the continued perfidy of the chieftain of Leinster, had once more taken the field, and being joined by the forces of his ever faithful adherent O'Ruarc, and O'Carrol, prince of Orgiel, (a district now comprehending the counties of Louth, Armagh, and Monaghan,) he encamped at Clondalkin, a few miles south of Dublin, with an army, which (probably with considerable exaggeration) has been computed at thirty thousand men.

Undaunted by his superior numbers, the confederates marched towards Dublin with a force not amounting to five thousand. Seven hundred Britons, with an Irish battalion, commanded by Donald Kavenagh, formed the vanguard, under Miles de Cogan, a valiant English knight. Raymond le Gross and the king of Leinster were with the main body, consisting of eight hundred British and the Leinster troops; while the rear under Earl Strongbow was composed of a thousand Irish and three hundred English troops. As they approached the army of Roderick he was dismayed at their martial appearance and steady discipline; and after skirmishing with them for three days, his tumultuary forces began to disperse, and the Ostmen of Dublin were soon left alone to sustain the fury of their offended sovereign and his allies.

The garrison now utterly despaired of being able to defend themselves against their implacable foe, and their consternation was augmented by an accidental fire which had destroyed one of their principal gates. They resolved, therefore,

once more to try the effect of negociation, and selected their archbishop, Laurence O'Toole, a prelate highly reverenced both for his piety and exalted birth, as the mediator upon this occasion. Him they authorized to express in their name the deepest penitence for their past transgressions, and to offer thirty hostages as sureties for their future fidelity. But he met nothing from the inexorable Dermod but evasive answers; and while the conference still continued, the impetuous Britons, under Raymond and Cogan, scaled the walls, pretending that the time of parley had expired, and the unprepared and unsuspecting garrison were slaughtered without mercy. Many, to escape the fury of their pursuers, plunged into the river and were drowned, while Hesculph, the governor, and a considerable body of the citizens, gained some vessels in the harbour, and escaped with their effects to the northern islands.

Dermod having invested Strongbow with the lordship of Dublin, who appointed Milo Cogan his governor, proceeded now to over-run

Meath, the eastern part of which Roderick had conferred on O'Ruarc, the old enemy of the king of Leinster. Anxious to support his arrangements, and fearful that his antagonists would speedily carry their arms into his own province of Connaught, Roderick again violently menaced a foe whom he had not the courage or ability to meet in the field. He charged him with having violated his solemn engagements, and threatened that if he did not abandon his cruel and unjust proceedings against his unoffending neighbours, the life of his son whom he held as a hostage in his hands, must answer for the perfidy of his father. To this communication the chieftain of Leinster replied in terms of the most studied contempt. He defied the power of the monarch, renounced his authority, expressed the most careless indifference about the fate of his son, and openly avowed his pretensions to the dominion of all Ireland, which, he said, he was determined to assert by every means in his power. Enraged at this insulting answer, Roderick, in the vexation of impotent dignity, ordered the

head of his unhappy hostage, who is represented by the annalists as one of the finest and most amiable youths of Leinster, to be struck off, together with that of a son of the gallant Donald Kavenagh, who was also in his power; and this act of brutal revenge, which could have no good tendency to the settlement of his affairs, excited a general feeling of detestation throughout the country.

The recent avowal of Dermod to contend for the supreme monarchy, and the fact that he and his foreign auxiliaries had commenced their devastations beyond his own district, at length began to spread alarm throughout the whole island. The people considered the calamities which threatened the country as a visitation from heaven for their offences, and the clergy convened a formal synod at Armagh to inquire into the particular cause of the Divine displeasure, when after much deliberation it was unanimously agreed, that it could be no other than the unchristian practice of buying and selling Englishmen as slaves, which the Almighty was now punishing by permit-

ting English invaders to reduce the Irish to slavery. To avert this evil they resolved that all English bondsmen should be set at liberty; and this determination served greatly to allay the alarm which had been excited. Some reverses sustained by the confederates confirmed the hopes which had thus been raised. Dermod, pursuing O'Ruarc into Breffney, was twice defeated, and obliged to retire; while the king of England, jealous of the growing power of Strongbow, had issued his royal edict, not only forbidding the transmission of further supplies to Ireland, but commanding all his subjects in that kingdom to return to England before the ensuing festival of Easter, on pain of being considered as traitors.

This intelligence caused the greatest consternation amongst the British adventurers, who now apprehended that they should be compelled to abandon all their prospects of wealth and glory, covered with disappointment and disgrace. But Strongbow, well acquainted with the character of his sovereign, resolved not to yield without an effort, and he de-

spatched Raymond le Gross, in whose fidelity and prudence he placed the fullest confidence, with letters to king Henry, in which he expressed the most unbounded loyalty, and declared that whatever he and his fellow soldiers had gained in Ireland, they held of him as their natural and rightful lord. Raymond was received by the king with the severe dignity of an offended monarch who, though apparently satisfied with his representations, was not disposed to give him a speedy or decisive answer; and intelligence of the death of Thomas à Becket, which arrived at that juncture, threw Henry into such consternation, that he had neither inclination nor leisure to attend to the affairs of Ireland.

In the mean time earl Strongbow experienced a fresh disaster by the death of his father-in-law, the king of Leinster, who expired, say the Irish annalists, the victim of a loathsome disease, in a state of horrid impenitence, and destitute of spiritual aid. This event was followed by the immediate defection of his Irish allies with the exception of

Donald Kavenagh, and one or two other petty chieftains; and almost at the same moment Hesculph, the Dane, who had lately escaped from Dublin, appeared at its gates with a considerable army of his countrymen which he had collected in the northern islands. He landed without opposition, and then marched in battle array to the east-gate; "his troops," says Hanmer, "being all mighty men of war, and well appointed after the Danish manner, being harnessed with good brigandines, jacks, and shirts of mail: their shields, bucklers, and targets were round, coloured red, and bound with iron; and as they seemed in arms, so they were no less in minds, iron-strong and mighty." Hesculph, determined to regain the seat of his ancestors, advanced to the assault with the greatest ardour; but he met with a vigorous opponent in Miles de Cogan, who, Strongbow having been called away to Waterford, commanded the city in his absence. A bloody contest ensued, in which the superior numbers of the Danes would probably have borne down all opposition, had not Richard Cogan, the

governor's brother, issued from the south postern-gate, and charged the enemy in the rear with the most terrific shouts. The Danes struck with terror and dismay, now broke their ranks, and fled to their ships; and their pursuers made terrible slaughter amongst them, and took prisoner Hesculph, their chief; while John Wood, their Admiral, who, on account of his reckless bravery, was called *Mad John*, was among the slain. Hesculph, who had been so lately their governor, was now led in triumph through the city. Cogan intended to have spared his life; but he imprudently boasted that the exultation of the Britons would not long continue, as he hoped ere long to meet them with a force that should defy opposition. The governor, however, frustrated his anticipations of personal revenge, by ordering his captive to immediate execution.

The events which quickly followed appeared to verify the predictions of Hesculph. Strongbow returned to Dublin in a state of great dejection at the alarming posture of his affairs, where he was soon joined by Raymond,

who could obtain no decisive answer from the king. Roderick and the Irish chieftains were fully acquainted with the distress of the adventurers; and Laurence, archbishop of Dublin, flew from province to province, exciting the people to arms against the common enemy. He also, in conjunction with the Irish monarch, sent emissaries to Gothred, king of the Isle of Man, and other princes of the Northern Isles, soliciting their aid against these ambitious foreigners; and he so alarmed their fears for their own security, that they agreed to block up the harbour with thirty ships, while the Irish should besiege the city by land. Roderick and his vassals soon environed the city on all sides. The monarch himself encamped with the Connaught troops, to the westward, at Castleknock. O'Ruarc and O'Carrol took post north of the harbour near Clontarf. The lord of Hy-Kinsellagh (Wexford) possessed the opposite side; and the prince of Thomond, who had again made his peace with Roderick, was stationed at Kilmainham, within less than a mile of the walls.

Even the archbishop of Dublin appeared in arms upon this occasion (a practice not unusual among the ecclesiastics of that period,) and commanded a particular troop.

But this formidable force which has been variously computed at from 40,000 to 60,000 men, instead of being under the absolute command of the monarch of Ireland, consisted of separate armies, under distinct leaders, divided by rivalries and jealousies, and without feeling that common bond of interest, which in the present state of the country could alone have insured success. They appeared to think that the sight of this great host would have been sufficient to frighten the garrison into submission; and for two months they contented themselves with investing the city so closely as to preclude the besieged from obtaining any supplies. This indeed had the intended effect; for every day provisions became more scanty in the garrison, and the soldiers, in consequence, grew weak and distempered; and to add to their distress, intelligence had arrived, that Fitz-Stephen was besieged in his castle at

Carrig by the men of Wexford, and that if not relieved within three days, he must inevitably fall into their hands. Thus pressed by misfortunes on every hand, Strongbow laid this embarrassing state of affairs before a council of war, by whom it was determined to enter into a treaty with the Irish monarch on terms not inconsistent with their honor. They requested the prelate of Dublin to become the mediator on this occasion, an office which he cheerfully accepted; and through him Strongbow proposed to acknowledge Roderick as his sovereign, and hold the province of Leinter from the Irish monarch, provided he would raise the siege and accept him as his vassal. The archbishop having laid the proposition before his sovereign, soon returned to the council, and declared that the only terms which the monarch of Ireland was willing to grant, were these: that Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford, with all the forts possessed by the Britons, should be immediately surrendered to him; and that the earl and his associates should, by an appointed day, depart from Ire-

land, absolutely renouncing all their pretended claims on the country. If these conditions were not instantly complied with, he declared his resolution of storming the city.

When the prelate retired, the British leaders appeared for some moments overwhelmed with consternation. Silence was at length interrupted by Fitz-Gerald, who dwelt on the various changes of fortune which they had undergone since their arrival in Ireland; and though they were now hemmed in on every side, and shut out from all hope of relief except their own well-tried valour, he exhorted them not to despair, but rather than submit to the degrading terms which had been made to them, boldly to make the onset on the undisciplined and ill-armed multitude by which they were surrounded, while their wits were fresh, and their bodies able. Raymond le Gross seconded the opinion of his uncle in an animated speech, and Miles de Cogan, starting from his seat, declared that it was better to die bravely with arms in their hands than submit to the mercy of barbarous enemies. A

spirit of desperate valour now seized the whole council, and they hastened to their respective posts to make the necessary preparations for the perilous adventure. Having filled the minds of the townsmen with dreadful apprehensions of the besiegers, numbers of them joined their ranks; and Strongbow after forming his little army into three divisions, marched in the greatest order against the quarter where Roderick was encamped. Raymond led the advanced-guard: Miles de Cogan commanded the centre division; and the earl with Fitz-Gerald accompanied the rear. Trusting to their numbers and the probable success of the negociation, little order was observed in the camp of Roderick; and the Irish troops were so completely taken by surprize, that they made but a feeble resistance to the furious onset of their enemies. The Britons rushed through the confused crowds spreading death on every hand; while the monarch, who was then in his bath, had scarcely time to seize his mantle, and join, half naked, the general rout. The other chieftains observed the flight of their countrymen, and,

uninformed of the cause, broke up their camps precipitately; and thus the Britons who, in the morning, were on the point of desperation, saw before evening their numerous enemies dispersed on all sides, abandoning to an enfeebled garrison, a rich booty, and provisions sufficient to support them for a year.

The success of this valorous enterprise having placed Dublin in a state of security, Strongbow set out for Wexford with a considerable force, to relieve his friend Fitz-Stephen. But a stratagem had already placed that gallant knight in the hands of his enemies. Having bravely repulsed every attack of the Wexfordians on his fort at Carrig, they at length solicited a parley; and at a conference to which he admitted them, they with oaths assured Fitz-Stephen that Roderick had stormed the city of Dublin, and put the whole of the Britons to the sword; and that the Irish monarch was now on his march to exterminate him and his followers. They affected a personal regard for him, and as an acknowledgment for his great kindness towards them, declared their

anxiety to favor his escape; and they solemnly assured him that if he would commit himself to their protection, they would convey him and his garrison safely to Wales before the arrival of Roderick. The British leader fell into the snare thus artfully laid for him; but as soon as he had quitted the fort, the besiegers instead of fulfilling their promises, cast him and his principal officers into chains, while they put the soldiers to death by a variety of cruel torments. But in the midst of their exultation, hearing of Strongbow's victory and his near approach, they set fire to the town of Wexford, and retired with their prisoners to a strong place in the middle of the harbour, called the Holy Island.

Strongbow, on his march, had met with opposition both vigorous and unexpected. While passing through a defile in Idrone, a district situated in the present county of Carlow, O'Ryan, the lord of that country, lay in ambush with a considerable force to oppose his progress; and while the British were hemmed in on all sides by woods, morasses, and preci-

pices, the Irish rushed from their retreat with such fury and terrific howlings, as threw their adversaries into the utmost confusion, and they would have experienced a total overthrow but for the exertions of their leaders. Meiler Fitz-Henry, a distinguished commander, was wounded and rescued with difficulty, and the result of the action would have been extremely uncertain, had not a monk called Nicholas, who served with the British army, discharged an arrow with such good aim against O'Ryan, that he fell down dead; and his followers, confounded at the loss of their chief, instantly abandoned the field. A tradition connected with this action long prevailed, which, though considered doubtful by our best historians, I shall relate to you. It stated, that the son of Strongbow, a youth of seventeen years, was so terrified at the shouts of the Irish, that he fled to Dublin in the greatest consternation, declaring that his father and his whole army were cut off—and that when he afterwards appeared before his father to congratulate him on his victory, the earl sternly condemned him to die

for cowardice, by being cut in two. The ancient monument in Christ-church, Dublin, on which the statue of Strongbow's son is continued only to the middle, with the bowels open, gives some countenance to this tradition.

When the earl reached Wexford, he had the mortification to witness the destruction of the town, and to learn the precarious situation of his friend Fitz-Stephen. His distress was further augmented by receiving an intimation from the Irish in the Holy Island, that if he adopted any measures to molest them, they would instantly strike off the heads of their prisoners. Knowing the desperate violence by which men placed in such circumstances are sometimes actuated, he was forced to leave his countrymen to their fate, and he marched to Waterford and Ferns, where, acting in his new capacity of prince of Leinster, he passed some time in settling contests between the petty chieftains, rewarding his friends, and punishing the disaffected, till an order from king Henry, summoned him to his presence. He immediately

repaired to England, and met his sovereign at Newenham, near Gloucester.

Henry, in a good measure escaped from the embarrassments in which he had been involved by the murder of Becket, had now resolved to undertake the reduction of Ireland in person; but it was still consistent with his policy to disavow the proceedings of Strongbow and his associates; and when the earl presented himself before his offended sovereign, he was sharply reproached for his presumption and disobedience. But he soon found means to allay this affected resentment, and the scene of dissimulation was closed by a treaty, in which Strongbow made a surrender of the city of Dublin, with all the conquered towns to the king, and the latter confirmed the earl in all his other Irish possessions, to be held of the king and his heirs. After the conclusion of this important transaction, Strongbow accompanied his royal master to Milford, where the forces were now assembling for the projected expedition.

In the mean time, a fresh attack had been

made on the garrison of Dublin, and though undertaken by O'Ruarc alone, it was repulsed with more difficulty than any of the preceding assaults, and not without considerable loss on the part of the British. But these unsuccessful efforts of the natives, only tended to impress them with terrible ideas of British valour, and take away all hope of a successful resistance to the formidable force which the renowned sovereign of England was about to lead into the country. The imbecile character of the Irish monarch added weight to this opinion, and each petty chieftain seemed more intent to avert the evils of invasion from his own district, than to form any general plan of insurrection for giving it effectual opposition. Some of them seemed disposed to send their submission to Henry before he appeared on their coast—and the men of Wexford, to avert the dreaded puuishment of their conduct towards Fitz-Stephen, sent deputies to the king at Pembroke, who humbly entreated that he would accept them as his vassals, and then made a merit of their proceedings in seizing a traitor, who had

forcibly possessed himself of their territory without the authority of his sovereign, and keeping him in chains to be at his Majesty's disposal. Henry received the deputies most graciously, affected to applaud their conduct, and declaring that he should soon inflict condign punishment on his undutiful subjects, dismissed the Irishmen with the most favourable dispositions to his interests.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arrival of Henry II.—Submission of the Chieftains of Munster and Leinster—Royal Festivities in Dublin—Synod of Cashel—The King's Departure—Hugh De Lacy, Chief Governor.

Two years had elapsed since the Britons first set hostile step on the soil of Ireland, and surely you cannot help feeling astonishment, that a force scarcely amounting to two thousand men should have accomplished so much in so short a time. While we condemn the injustice of the enterprize, and the barbarous cruelty which too generally marked its progress, we cannot but admire the valour which so repeatedly foiled their numerous enemies, and the wisdom with which they conciliated the friendship of

the more distant chieftains. They directed their principal hostility against the supreme monarch, who was by no means popular, and having obtained possession of the province of Leinster, they gave not the slightest intimation of invading the territories of the neighbouring states; and thus by lulling the suspicions, and gaining the confidence of the provincial princes, the latter became disposed to view the king of England more in the character of a protector than a conqueror.

After a solemn act of devotion in the church of St. David's, to implore the blessing of heaven on his enterprize, king Henry II. embarked at Milford, attended by earl Strongbow, William Fitz-Andelm, Humphry de Bohun, Hugh de Lacy, Robert Fitz-Bernard, with many other barons, four hundred knights, and about four thousand chosen soldiers. They were embarked in a fleet of two hundred and forty ships; and this armament, which in those days was considered truly formidable, entered the harbour of Waterford on the 18th of October 1172. Henry having declared that he came not to

Ireland with the view of conquest, but to take peaceable possession of a country which had been granted to him by the pope, entered on the exercise of his sovereignty immediately after he had landed. An Ostman lord, on hearing that the fleet was at sea, feared that the landing of the soldiers might expose his property to depredation, and drew some chains across the harbour, to direct their course to another quarter. But the English soon breaking through this obstacle, Henry ordered the seizure of the chieftain and his assistants; and, instead of treating them as enemies who had acted in open war, he had them tried and executed for treason as rebellious subjects, who had presumed to impede the progress of their rightful sovereign.

The most joyful acclamations hailed the entrance of the king of England into Waterford. His high character and the magnificence with which he was surrounded, seemed to obliterate from the minds of the inhabitants every recollection of their past sufferings from his precursors. Strongbow did homage

for his principality of Leinster, while the men of Wexford appeared to present their prisoner Fitz-Stephen, in chains to the king; who, reproaching the captive with assumed sternness, for his presumption, remanded him to prison. On the following day, Mac Arthy, prince of Desmond, appeared at Henry's court, surrendered into the king's hands his city of Cork, and became his vassal and tributary for the remainder of his territory.

The king of England now resolved to display his pomp by making a stately progress into Munster. Attended by a magnificent train he marched to Lismore, where he gave orders for the erection of a fort; and then proceeded to Cashel, to impart to the archbishop of that see, his gracious designs respecting the church; and here he received from Donald O'Brien the surrender of Limerick; and that prince, with O'Phelan, of the Decies, Fitzpatrick, of Ossory, and all the inferior chiefs of Munster, acknowledged him as their liege lord and sovereign. All were received with gra-

cious assurances of favour and protection, and dismissed with magnificent presents.

Having effected these important objects, king Henry returned to Waterford; and as it was no longer necessary to maintain his show of resentment against Fitz-Stephen, he permitted his barons to intercede for him; and on his surrendering Wexford and its territory to the king, he was set at liberty, and confirmed in all his other acquisitions. Having stationed garrisons in all the ceded cities, he now resolved in due form to take possession of Dublin, which he determined to make the capital of the island. He led his troops through the intervening country in a slow and stately progress, to astonish the rude inhabitants with the magnificent appearance of the royal army —and it had the desired effect; for during his route, all the chiefs of Leinster, including O'Carroll of Louth, and O'Ruarc, the long tried friend of Roderick, imitated the example of the Munster princes, and did homage to the king of England. Roderick, the monarch,

appears upon this occasion to have acted with a degree of spirit which his former conduct would not have led us to expect. Being abandoned by his vassals, he knew he was not sufficiently powerful to march against the royal invader, yet he resolved to defend his own province against hostile attack; and for that purpose placed his Connaught troops in entrenchments on the banks of the Shannon, and rejected every overture of De Lacy and Fitz-Andelm, who were deputed to meet him, either to persuade or force him to a submission; and his example was followed by all the princes of Ulster.

In the mean time king Henry arrived in Dublin, which at that period contained no building sufficiently capacious to receive the royal train: but a large temporary structure was raised with hurdles, and richly ornamented, on a spot (now called College-green) in the south-eastern suburbs. If you have ever seen our fine metropolis, you will be surprised to hear what a diminutive place Dublin was in those days, compared with its present extent. Its whole length within the walls, was from

near the entrance to the Lower Castle-Yard to a little beyond Corn Market; its breadth, from the river to Little Ship-street; and the entire circuit of its walls about a mile. It contained few stone buildings except Christ's church, erected by the Danes in 1038, and some other religious edifices. One bridge crossed the Liffey where Whitworth-bridge now stands; and on the North side of the river there were scarcely any buildings except a suburb called Ostmantown (afterwards corrupted into Oxmantown,) which was inhabited by the Danes, from whom it was denominated.

As Christmas approached all the vassal Irish lords flocked to Dublin, and were sumptuously entertained by their new sovereign at his pavilion. "Wonderful it was to the simple people to behold," says an ancient chronicler, "the majesty of so puissant a prince; the sport, and the mirth, and the continual music, the masking, mumming and strange shows, the gold, the silver, and plate, the precious ornaments, the dainty dishes, furnished with all

sorts of fish and flesh, the wines, the spices, the delicate and sumptuous banquets, the orderly service ; the comely march, and seemly array of all officers ; the gentlemen, the esquires, the knights and lords in their rich attire ; the running at tilt in complete harness, with barbed horses, where the staves shivered and flew in splinters, safer to sit then upon an Irish pilion that playeth cross and pile with the rider." Henry, like more modern princes, hoped by this display of grandeur, and the most affable condescensions, to raise the admiration, and gain the affections of his new subjects, and thus make them forget the loss of their independence which they had so tamely forfeited.

But he did not neglect the still more important objects of gaining the sanction of the clergy, and fulfilling the condition of his grant from pope Adrian with respect to what was called the reformation of the church and the people of Ireland ; that is, the bringing of them into complete subjection to the see of Rome in doctrine and practice. He accordingly issued orders, that a synod of the clergy should

assemble at Cashel, and his mandate was obeyed by three archbishops and most of the bishops. But the primate Gelasius pleaded his great age and infirmities for not attending this important assembly, by which the dominion of Ireland conferred on king Henry by the bull of pope Adrian was fully confirmed, and the supremacy of Rome established in this country. Some writers tell us that the primate Gelasius afterwards gave his assent to the proceedings of the synod of Cashel; while others assert that he assembled another synod in Ulster to oppose its proceedings, by command of Roderick. This primate was greatly esteemed for his piety and mortified life; and we are told that in all his journeys he carried with him a favourite white cow to supply him with milk, which was his only sustenance.

King Henry now conceived that his authority over Ireland was completely established. The whole province of Leinster with a great part of Meath, and the principal maritime towns, had been ceded to him; while all the chieftains except those of Ulster and Con-

naught, had acknowledged him as their liege lord. To secure the possession of the ceded districts he put them under the English laws, divided them into counties, and appointed sheriffs and itinerant judges for the regular administration of justice. He granted the city of Dublin to the inhabitants of Bristol, on whom he conferred a charter as well as on the Ostmen of Waterford. Being still jealous of the authority and ambition of Strongbow, he sought to detach the other chieftains from his interest by conferring favours upon them. He granted the whole territory of Meath to Hugh de Lacy, whom he also appointed chief governor, with Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald as his coadjutors. The custody of Waterford was commit ted to Humphry de Bohun, Robert Fitz-Bernard and Hugh de Gunville: William Fitz-Andelm de Burgo, Philip of Hastings, and Philip de Braosa or Bruse, were stationed at Wexford; and the whole province of Ulster was conferred upon John De Courcey, an adventurous knight, provided he could reduce it by force of arms.

Having thus, as he vainly hoped, secured the tranquil possession of his Irish dominions, king Henry embarked in the spring of 1173 at Wexford. Having passed rapidly through England, he set sail for Normandy, where the pope's legates had arrived to make inquisition into the death of Thomas à Becket. The king, not without considerable difficulty, at length adjusted this troublesome business, and received absolution from pope Alexander, with a confirmation of the grant of Ireland which pope Adrian had made to him and his heirs for ever.

CHAPTER. IX.

Revolt of the Irish Chieftains—Attempt to assassinate Hugh de Lacy—Death of O'Ruarc—Hervey of Mountmorres and Raymond le Gross—Defeat of Mac Arthy of Desmond—Gallant Exploit of Donald More at Thurles—Massacre at Waterford—Raymond le Gross captures Limerick—Submission of Roderick O'Connor—Battle of Cashel—Death of Strongbow—Donald More burns Limerick.

Soon after the departure of king Henry, it became evident that the Irish chieftains regarded their promises of submission to his authority only so far as there was force and power to command them; and they seemed resolved to defend their territories against every attempt of the new settlers to extend their acquisitions.

Strongbow, deprived by his jealous sovereign of any direction in the affairs of government, was now residing at Ferns, the chief city of his principality, where he solemnized the marriage of his daughter with Robert de Quiny, one of the first adventurers, whom had created constable and standard bearer of Leinster. But the nuptial rejoicings were scarcely terminated, when the new bridegroom was summoned by the earl to attend him into Offaley (now the King's County) to punish O'Dempsey, a refractory vassal. In this expedition many of Strongbow's men, including his standard bearer, were slain in one of those sudden assaults for which the Irish were at that time so famous. About the same period Hugh de Lacy, the chief governor, began to erect forts and take other measures for securing the possession of Meath, which had been granted to him by king Henry; but he found a powerful opponent to the establishment of an English settlement in that quarter in O'Ruarc of Breffney, on whom Roderick O'Connor had conferred the eastern part of this province. O'Ruarc having complained of various injuries

committed on his property by the new settlers, a day was appointed for holding a conference between him and de Lacy at the hill of Tarah, to discuss the pretensions of both parties, an old Irish custom which was frequently resorted to for adjusting disputes. It is related by historians, that on the night preceding the conference, Griffith, a Welch knight, the nephew of Maurice Fitzgerald, dreamed he saw a number of wild boars rush on the chief governor and his uncle, and that one of them would have slain the two lords had he not rescued them by killing the monster. Alarmed at his dream, Griffith strove to dissuade de Lacy from holding the conference; but the latter ridiculed his superstitious fears, and the two chiefs met at the appointed time and place, accompanied by a few attendants on each side. Yet Griffith, persuaded that some treachery was intended by O'Ruarc, resolved to be prepared for the worst, and having selected seven of his associates on whose valour he could depend, he drew near with them

to the place of conference, and continued for some time, as if for pastime, to ride in tournament round the field. Meanwhile, the chieftains proceeded in their conference with little prospect of coming to an accommodation; till O'Ruarc suddenly retiring, made a signal to a party of armed men whom he had placed on the opposite side of the hill, and then rushed furiously with his battle-axe on de Lacy. His interpreter interposing, was slain, and the chief governor was twice beaten to the ground; but Fitz-Gerald flew to his rescue, and being quickly followed by Griffith and his party, the assailants were put to flight. O'Ruarc himself, while mounting his horse, was slain by Griffith, and many of his followers perished in the pursuit. It is difficult to say which party was the aggressor in this business; but the result, though it freed De Lacy from a dangerous rival, and left him in peaceable possession of his extensive territories, excited the jealousy of the native chieftains in every part of the island, with respect to the ultimate designs of the new settlers, and they became

every day more anxious to shake off the yoke of the foreigners.

The critical situation of king Henry's affairs at this time, favoured the design of the Irish chieftains. His sons had been excited by their mother, queen Eleanor, and the king of France, to raise the standard of rebellion against an indulgent father, and he found himself involved at once in the horrors of both foreign and domestic warfare. Deserted by many both of his English and Norman nobility, he had to employ twenty thousand mercenaries to fight his battles, and to recall a great part of his troops, with several principal leaders, from Ireland. Amongst others Strongbow flew to the assistance of his sovereign in Normandy; and this zealous alacrity gave the king such a proof of his attachment, that he entrusted him with the government of Gisors. This great diminution of the English force in the country, now encouraged the Irish princes completely to throw off the mask—they openly disavowed their late submissions, and prepared to take vengeance on the remnant of the invaders.

These had been entrusted to the command of Hervey de Mountmorres, who was extremely unpopular with the soldiery, while Raymond le Gross, his second in command, was their idol, on account of his conciliating manners, his attention to their wants, and his cheerfully participating with them in the hardships of a military life. In all these qualifications Hervey was deficient, and this created a rivalry between the two commanders highly detrimental to their common interest at such a critical juncture.

When king Henry received intelligence of the alarming state of affairs in Ireland, he resolved once more to entrust earl Strongbow withthe direction of its government; and to enliven his zeal, he made him a grant of the town of Wexford, with a fort which had been lately erected at Wicklow. Fitz-Stephen, de Lacy, and Cogan, were at the same time commanded to repair to England or Normandy, lest their rivalry should impede the measures of the chief governor for the pacification of the country.

When Strongbow arrived in Dublin, he found

the discontents of the soldiery inflamed to the highest pitch. They openly demanded the dismissal of his uncle Mountmorres, and that Raymond le Gross should be appointed to command them. Having no means of satisfying the arrears of pay which were due to them, he was compelled to submit; and he resolved immediately to employ them in a course of active service as the most likely means to allay this spirit of disaffection. The petty lords of Offaley having committed some offence, Raymond over-ran that country with fire and sword, and carried the booty to Lismore, where finding that some vessels lay at anchor in Dungarvan, he put his spoil on board them, in order to convey it to Waterford. The Danes of Cork having heard of these transactions, proceeded with a fleet of thirty sail to attack the transports, thirteen in number; but they were totally defeated by the commander, Adam de Hereford, and the Danish admiral Gilbert was killed by David Walsh of Waterford. The victors captured eight of the Danish vessels, and then sailed in triumph to their place of destination. But

when you read of naval engagements in those days you are not to suppose that they were like our modern sea-fights. They had then neither cannon nor musketry, and the ships were so small that they seldom contained more than forty or fifty men. While at a distance, they shot arrows at each other as in land battles; and when they came to close action, one party generally boarded the ships of the other, and the contest was decided by the sword and the battle-axe.

While the sea-fight, was going on at Dungarvan, Mac Arthy, the prince of Desmond, proceeded from Cork by land, with a considerable force, to support his allies the Danes. But Raymond encountered and defeated him on the road, took from him four thousand head of cattle, and then entered Waterford in all the triumph of a conqueror. His popularity with the soldiery was now at its very height; and his recent career of success encouraged him to demand Basilia, the sister of Strongbow, in marriage, together with the post of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster; but the

earl, jealous of Raymond's rising power, rejected the overture; and the latter, provoked and disgusted, retired abruptly into Wales, under pretence of taking possession of some lands which had fallen to him by the death of his father, William Fitz-Gerald.

This event compelled Strongbow again to confer the command of the army on Hervey of Mountmorres, who, anxious to emulate the activity of his predecessor, and thus regain his popularity, solicited the Earl to undertake an expedition into Munster, to chastise the revolt of the Southern chieftains. The chief governor yielding to this advice, led, in conjunction with Mountmorres, a considerable body of troops to the city of Cashel. But Donald-More, or Donald the Great, a descendant of the famous Brian Boiromhe, being at that time king of Thomond, or North Munster, made vigorous preparations to meet the invaders. When Strongbow became acquainted with his proceedings, he despatched an order to Dublin, that a considerable portion of the Danish garrison should march to his assistance; but when

Donald heard of their approach, he instantly conceived the design of cutting them off, as the most effectual means of dispiriting his antagonists, and this he carried into immediate effect; for while the Ostmen lay encamped in careless security at Thurles, he suddenly rushed upon them at an early hour in the morning, slew four of their principal commanders, and four hundred of their men, and then returned without molestation to Limerick. When Strongbow received the news of this misfortune, he threw himself into Waterford with all the precipitation of a routed general.

The disgrace which the English had sustained at the battle of Thurles, roused the disaffected Irish every where to arms. Roderick O'Connor made active exertions to gain the co-operation of the chiefs of Meath and Ulster, while those of Leinster, including even Donald Kavanagh, the son of the late king Dermod, openly disclaimed their submission to king Henry. Roderick had already passed the Shannon, wasting the country almost to the walls of Dublin; and Strongbow, now reduced

to act on the defensive, had no other resource but to solicit the return of Raymond le Gross, with such forces as he could procure; and he who so lately had proudly refused to grant him his sister in marriage, now offered to gratify him in all his demands, on condition that he would come to the relief of his countrymen. Listening to the voice of love and patriotism, Raymond speedily assembled thirty knights of his own kindred, a hundred horsemen, and three hundred archers, with whom he arrived in Waterford, early in 1174, at the very moment when the townsmen were preparing to rid themselves of the English garrison by a general massacre. His arrival, however, frustrated this project for the present; but when Strongbow and Raymond, with the greater part of the soldiers, left the town for Wexford, to check the rising spirit of disaffection in Leinster, the inhabitants suddenly assailed those that remained, and put to the sword, all the English who could be found, (including Purcell, the governor,) without regard to age, sex, or condition. A few, who had opportu-

nity to seize their arms, took refuge in the citadel, called Reginald's tower, where they bravely defended themselves, and at length forced the conspirators to submission.

During these sanguinary transactions at Waterford, Basilia, the sister of Strongbow, arrived in Wexford with a magnificent train, and was solemnly espoused by the brave Raymond, who received an extensive tract of land as her dowry, with the appointment of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. But such was at that time the unsettled state of the country, that in the midst of the nuptial rites, intelligence arrived that Roderick O'Connor had suddenly passed the Shannon, with a great army,—expelled the English colonists, with Tyrrell, their commander, from Meath, and destroyed all the forts which they had lately erected; and that he even threatened the capital. The very morning after the celebration of his marriage, Raymond was obliged to gird on his armour, and lead his troops towards Dublin; but the Irish chieftains, contented with the depredations which they had commit-

ted in Meath, retired at his approach, and in precipitating their flight, Raymond slew about one hundred and fifty of their followers, amongst whom was Donald Kavanagh, one of the earliest allies of the English in Ireland.

The authority of Strongbow having been thus re-established in Leinster, he resolved to renew his attempt for bringing the prince of Thomond to subjection. For that purpose he ordered Raymond le Gross to march, with six hundred chosen men, against Limerick, of which Donald-More had possessed himself since the withdrawal of the English garrison. Raymond reached the banks of the Shannon, which encompasses the city, without opposition; but here he found the bridges broken down, and all access denied by the rapidity of the stream. Two valorous knights plunged into the river, hoping to discover a ford; but while returning to encourage the troops, one of them was drowned. Undismayed by this disaster, Meyler Fitz-Henry, the nephew of Raymond, putting spurs to his horse, rushed into the river, and having reached the opposite shore, he co-

vered his head with his shield, to protect it from the stones and other missiles which were flung from the walls. Perceiving the perilous situation of his kinsman, Raymond now earnestly entreated the soldiers to fly to his relief. He set the example himself by plunging into the river, while he shouted "St. David;" upon which he was followed by the whole army, who reached the opposite bank with the loss of only two of their number. The garrison, astonished at the intrepidity of the assailants, now fled from the ramparts, and Raymond entered the city without resistance: the soldiers obtained a considerable booty, and Meyler Fitz-Henry was entrusted with the custody of the place, with a garrison of five hundred men.

As the re-establishment of the English power in Leinster, and the reduction of Limerick, completely subdued the spirit of the monarch Roderick, he perceived the futility of attempting, with a vassal army on whose zeal or fidelity he could not for a moment depend, to resist the augmented power of the king of England, who was now triumphant over all his

foreign and domestic enemies. Yet, resolving still to act with the dignity of a sovereign, he refused to treat with Strongbow, but despatched Catholicus, archbishop of Tuam, attended by two other eminent ecclesiastics, to London, to adjust the terms of a treaty with king Henry in person, which were agreed upon at Windsor in the year 1175. By this treaty Roderick consented to do homage and pay tribute as liege-man to the king of England, the tribute to consist of every tenth merchantable hide as well from Connaught as the rest of the island, excepting those places which had been ceded to king Henry, over which Roderick claimed no authority; and on these conditions he was allowed to hold the kingdom of Connaught and all his other lands and sovereignties in the most ample manner. This treaty was soon afterwards ratified at Dublin in a grand council of prelates and barons, and thus the English authority seemed to be greatly strengthened, if not fully established in the island.

Strongbow now sought to unite the interests of the principal English leaders by intermar-

riages; and to secure the attachment of Maurice Fitzgerald, he made him a grant of Wicklow Castle, in addition to a large district in Offaley, which he had received from the king. But new troubles were excited by the jealousy which Hervey of Mountmorres still entertained for his old rival Raymond le Gross, who, he assured king Henry by secret emissaries, was aiming at an independent sovereignty in Ireland; as a proof of which he said that he had secured Limerick and other places with garrisons devoted to his interests, and who were secretly sworn to support his designs. It was not difficult to excite in the breast of Henry suspicions of the rising power of the adventurers; and accordingly, in 1176, he sent over two commissioners to watch the conduct of Strongbow, and two others to conduct Raymond to the king.

The intrepid chieftain was on the point of obeying the mandate of his sovereign, when intelligence arrived that Donald-More, the ever active enemy of the English power, had laid siege to Limerick; and that the garrison, cut

off from all supplies, must inevitably perish unless immediately relieved. Earl Strongbow, though labouring at this time under a painful disease, assembled his forces, in order to lead them to the relief of Limerick; but the soldiers with one voice refused to march against O'Brien, unless their favourite general was once more placed at their head. The commissioners, considering the emergency, agreed to defer their departure, and Raymond, with apparent reluctance, but with conscious triumph over his malignant enemies, yielded to the entreaties of the earl, and accepted the command.

He left Dublin at the head of six hundred British troops, and was joined on his route by the forces of Ossory and Wexford, whose chieftains were actuated to join the English upon this occasion by a feeling of personal hatred to O'Brien. On his march Raymond learned that the prince of Thomond had raised the siege of Limerick, and entrenched his army in a defile near Cashel, through which the English had to pass. When he drew near this spot, the British general reconnoitred the si-

tuation of the enemy, whom he perceived to be posted in considerable force behind their works. He then disposed his troops for the assault, to which the English advanced with all the calmness of experienced and disciplined valour. This having been mistaken for timidity by Fitzpatrick, the prince of Ossory, he bluntly told his allies that they must exert themselves more vigorously, and conquer or be destroyed, for they were far from refuge or support: adding, that if they gave way, he and his countrymen would instantly join the enemy. Raymond and his brave followers needed not this stimulus to exertion; for no sooner were they in sight of their antagonists, than they rushed into the defile, and drove the Irish from their entrenchments with great slaughter, who in their flight spread terror and dismay throughout all Munster. Donald-More, after this defeat, was obliged to sue for peace, and in one day Raymond had the honour of receiving hostages from him and from Roderick, king of Connaught.

Having thus placed Limerick in a state of

security, the assistance of Raymond was required to adjust some differences in the family of Mac Arthy of Desmond. That prince, after resigning the city of Cork and his best lands in that county to the English, had retired into Kerry, where his own son had risen in rebellion against him, and put him in prison. The father stated his wrongs to Raymond, earnestly soliciting his protection, and promising great advantages to him and his associates, if he should be restored to his dominions. Raymond and his followers were nothing loath to engage in such an enterprize. They speedily overran Desmond, liberated the old prince, and delivered the rebellious son to his father, by whom he was beheaded. Raymond, for this service, was rewarded with a valuable grant of land, which was enjoyed for many centuries by his descendants the earls of Kerry, and is now in possession of their representative, the marquis of Lansdowne.

But in the midst of this career of success, the English general received from his wife, secret information of the death of earl Strongbow,

which required his immediate return to Dublin. Basilia, apprehensive that the letter, in the present distracted state of the country, might fall into the hands of enemies, couched the important information which it contained in mysterious terms, saying that *her great tooth which had ached so long, had at last fallen out.* But Raymond well understood its meaning, and immediately repaired to Limerick to consult with some select friends on the plan which he should pursue in the present emergency. It was agreed that as the chief governor was dead, while he, the second in command, was summoned to England, their first object should be to adopt measures for securing the English province, and that for this purpose the garrison must be withdrawn from Limerick. Raymond was exceedingly mortified at being thus compelled to abandon his conquest; but he indulged the hope that he might now safely entrust the custody of the city to the prince of Thomond, who by his late submission had become one of the king's barons. He accordingly sent for the chieftain, who, with affected

humility and gratitude for the confidence reposed in him, accepted the trust, and took a solemn oath to take custody of Limerick for the king of England, and to restore it peaceably at the royal will and pleasure. Raymond, now delivered from all apprehension, proceeded to evacuate the town; but the troops had scarcely passed over one end of the bridge when the other was broken down; and Raymond had the mortification to behold the city, which he had taken singular pains to fortify, set on fire in four different quarters, by order of O'Brien, who declared that Limerick should no longer be a nest for foreigners. Donald-More may be applauded for this act, as a proof of his zeal in the cause of his country; but this is not sufficient to justify the dissimulation which he used, or his deliberate breach of a solemn oath; though this alas! was a crime too common, at that period, in the history of all nations. It is said that when this transaction was reported to king Henry with a view of injuring Raymond le Gross, the king, instead of condemning his conduct, replied, that the

first gaining of Limerick by Raymond was a noble exploit; the recovery of it still nobler; but that the only act of wisdom was his abandoning his conquest in this manner.

Raymond reached Dublin in time to attend the obsequies of earl Strongbow, which were conducted with great solemnity and magnificence by the archbishop Lawrence O'Toole. The character of this famous chieftain, who enjoyed his high dignity for so short a time, is very differently represented by Irish and English writers. The former consider him as a cruel and unrelenting oppressor, and attribute his death to the divine vengeance on his enormities. The latter assert that his temper was composed and uniform, not dejected by misfortune nor elated by success—his disposition liberal, and his manners courteous—that he was diffident of his own judgment, and cautious of proposing plans of operation, but undaunted and vigorous in executing them; and in battle he was the standard on which his soldiers fixed their eyes. As you may be curious to know what became of the vast territory which he got by his wife the prin-

cess of Leinster, I shall tell you, as it has been stated to us by ancient writers. By the princess Eva he left but one daughter, named Isabell, who was sole heiress to his vast estates. When arrived at her fourteenth year, king Richard I. gave her in marriage to William Maxfield, earl marshal of England, and who now, in right of his wife, became earl of Pembroke and prince of Leinster. This earl left five sons and five daughters. All the sons successively enjoyed their father's great patrimony, and died without issue; it was then divided among the daughters in the following manner:—the eldest, Joan, who married William de Valence, son of the earl of March, had the county of Wexford for her portion; Matilda, married to the earl of Norfolk, had Carlow; Isabell, married to Sir Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford, had Kilkenny; Sibilla, who married the earl of Ferrers and Derby, had Kildare; and Eva, the youngest daughter, who was married to Lord Bruce of Gower, had the manor of Dunamase, in the Queen's County.

CHAPTER X.

William Fitz-Andelm De Burgo, Chief Governor—Bull of Pope Alexander—Sir John De Courcey and Sir Amoric St. Lawrence—Vigorous Administration of Hugh De Lacy—Progress of De Courcey in Ulster—Battle of Dundalk—Murder of Miles de Cogan—Successful Defence of Cork by Raymond le Gross – Prince John, Chief Governor—Interview with the Irish Chieftains at Waterford—General Revolt—Murder of Hugh de Lacy—John De Courcey, Chief Governor—Death of Henry II.

The death of Strongbow made a great alteration in the relative situation of Raymond le Gross ; and now instead of being compelled to embark for England as a delinquent, he was considered by the council as the fittest

person to fill the office of chief governor, at least, till the king's pleasure should be known. The commissioners cheerfully concurred in this choice, and hoped that they would, on their return to England, be able to persuade their royal master, that it would be highly advantageous to his interest, and that of the country. But Henry, who now seemed anxious to crush the power of all the early adventurers, was peculiarly jealous of the popularity which Raymond had acquired by his activity and success. He therefore annulled his appointment, and entrusted the government of Ireland to William Fitz-Andelm de Burgo, a kinsman of his own, and on whose loyalty he placed unbounded reliance. The new chief governor, attended by Vivian, the pope's legate, Robert Fitz-Stephen, John de Courcey, Miles de Cogan, and a train of fifty knights, landed at Wexford, where Raymond le Gross resigned his office, and retired to a private station, with the character of the wisest and bravest of the English commanders.

Fitz-Andelm commenced his government by

making a stately progress along the coast to inspect the various cities and forts. He then convened an assembly of the clergy at Waterford, where Vivian, the legate, produced the bull of pope Alexander, which denounced the most dreadful censures of the church on all who should resist the sovereign authority of king Henry as rightful lord of Ireland, or impeach the grant made to him by the Holy See. But at the very moment when these denunciations were pronounced, the Irish chieftains of Meath were slaughtering the English without mercy or distinction, and demolishing their forts; and Fitz-Andelm, who appears to have had no abilities for such a juncture, adopted no means to repress their violence. Indeed the leading object of the new chief governor appeared to be to depress the power of the early adventurers, and to enrich himself and his Norman dependants at their expense. The death of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the progenitor of the two great houses of Kildare and Desmond, about this time, furthered his views, as he prevailed on the sons of Fitz-Gerald, with

Raymond le Gross, and Fitz-Stephen, to exchange their peaceable settlements, for others more liable to the incursions of the natives. The first adventurers soon became restless under the new government, and a spirit of mutiny began to spread among the soldiery, who saw their viceroy and his Normans revelling in luxury, while they were left without pay or necessaries. Fitz-Andelm was also accused of using the meanest flatteries to the Irish chieftains, which tended to augment their confidence without lessening their disaffection.

Amongst the English leaders John De Courcey was the most remarkable for his strength of body and vigour of constitution. His precipitate valour, rendered him insensible to danger, while his simple manners, and his disregard of personal accommodation, made him the idol of the soldiery. He had served with distinction in all the wars of Henry II. His brother-in-law, Sir Amoric St. Lawrence, was his constant associate, and these two valiant knights are said to have made a vow in the church of the Blessed Virgin at Rouen, to live

and die together, and to divide between them whatever they won by the sword. De Courcey thought the present a favourable opportunity for realizing the grant which the king had made to him a short time before, of such lands in Ulster as he could subdue, and he promised to share his fortune with all who preferred a gallant enterprize, to a life of inglorious ease. He fixed on Down as the first object of attack, to which it is said he was encouraged by an old prophecy, that it was to be subdued by a stranger mounted on a white horse, with a shield charged with painted birds.

His old friend, Sir Amoric St. Lawrence, and Roger de la Poer, a brave young knight, accompanied De Courcey on this expedition, and they were followed by six or seven hundred soldiers. After a march of four days they reached Down; but Mac Dunleve, or O'Donnell, the prince of that district, had fled at the first approach of hostilities, and left his people a prey to these invaders, who pillaged them without mercy. Vivian, the legate,

who happened to be in that quarter at the time, interposed in their behalf, but his remonstrances were unheeded; the English continued their ravages, and fortified themselves in Down, as a proof that they were determined to maintain their acquisition. The legate now advised the Irish chieftain to have recourse to arms, and rescue his country from these lawless invaders. In conformity with this counsel, Mac Dunleve quickly assembled a tumultuary force of ten thousand men, and laid siege to Down; but the chivalrous De Courcey, though his whole force did not exceed seven hundred, rushed forth from the city to meet the assailants. He posted his little army to great advantage, having a bog on one side, and a great ditch on the other. Sir Amoric St. Lawrence commanded the horse on the left, which amounted to one hundred and forty, each horseman having a bowman behind him: the remainder of the foot were in the centre, and on the right, under De Courcey and Roger de la Poer. Mac Dunleve, the Irish chief, observing the small number of the English horse, ordered his foot

to halt till he routed them, which he supposed would be a matter of easy accomplishment. But as he advanced furiously to the attack, he was received with flights of arrows from the English archers in the rear, who, when their quivers were empty, rushed through the ranks of their cavalry, houghed the horses of the Irish, and when they had fallen, despatched the riders with their skeyns. The attack of the horse being thus repulsed, Sir John De Courcey brought up his foot to oppose the onset of the Irish infantry. A long and desperate conflict ensued, in which the English arrows, spears, and swords, on the one side, and the Irish darts, and battle-axes on the other, did dreadful execution. But De Courcey repulsed every attempt of his numerous, though undisciplined opponents to force his well-chosen position, and at length they fled across the plain in the greatest confusion. Sir Amoric St. Lawrence now called on Montgomery, his standard-bearer, to advance his standard, that they might pursue the flying foe. Montgomery remonstrated against the

rashness of the attempt as they had but forty horses left out of seven score. "Then," said Sir Amoric, "give me the standard, I will bear it myself." "If that be your pleasure," replied Montgomery, "you shall not hereafter charge me with cowardice; under this standard I have got honour, and under this standard, if God so please, I will die." Then the pursuit began, and they soon came up with two hundred Irish under Connor O'Loghlin. A terrible fight ensued, in which Sir Amoric St. Lawrence was twice unhorsed, and his nephew Lionel slain. The valiant knight then fought on foot, surrounded by a few of his bravest followers, till Sir John De Courcey came to his rescue, and the Irish abandoned the field.

De Courcey was, for some time, left at liberty to parcel out his lands, and build forts for the security of his conquest. But he was interrupted in the following summer by a fresh attack from fifteen thousand of the Irish, when both sides fought with the greatest desperation. The English were again victorious, but

not without considerable loss, Sir Amoric St. Lawrence and his son being among the wounded. These successes gave the neighbouring Irish lords such an opinion of the invincible valour of the invaders, that they now appeared to court their favour, and gave De Courcey the most flattering assurances of their attachment. One of these chieftains named Mac Mahon, even bound himself to the English interests by the band of gossipred, the most sacred tie amongst the Irish ; and De Courcey, as a proof of his friendship and confidence, admitted him into his councils, and gave him the custody of two of his forts. But the Irish chieftain speedily evinced the insincerity of his professions by levelling the forts to the ground, and when questioned for the sudden breach of faith, he sternly answered, "that he promised; not to hold stone walls of De Courcey, but the land, and that it was contrary to his nature to couch himself within cold stones, while the woods were nigh." To punish this revolt, the English entered Mac Mahon's territory, ravaged it with fire and sword, and swept all the cattle,

the chief riches of the Irish, before them. The prey was so great, that they were forced to divide it into three herds, each of which was conducted by a distinct body of the English forces. The whole, which formed a line of three miles, had to pass through a deep and narrow defile, with vast woods on either side, in which Mac Mahon lay in ambush with eleven thousand men. At a concerted signal, the Irish suddenly rushed from their concealment, attacked each division of the English separately, and thus threw the whole army, encumbered with their booty, into the most terrible confusion, as they were at once assailed by the enemy, and trodden down by the infuriated cattle. The prey was now abandoned, and De Courcey forming his men as well as circumstances would permit, had to fight his way through the defile, surrounded by a host of enemies. They were pursued into the plain by the Irish, where several desperate encounters took place with great loss of lives on both sides. In one of these Mac Mahon was slain, and on the part of the English, Sir Nicholas

St. Lawrence was desperately wounded, while Sir Roger de la Poer being taken prisoner, was afterwards rescued by the valiant Sir Amoric. Four hundred English men fell in this action.

At length De Courcey reached one of his forts with the remnant of his gallant band; and as the enemy's forces were encamped within half a mile of him, he ordered a strict watch. At midnight, after a short repose, Sir Amoric ventured out with a small escort to view the posture of the Irish, whom he found as he expected, in a state of the most careless security. He quickly returned to the fort, and informed De Courcey that he supposed the enemy to be about five thousand strong, who were all sleeping or feasting; and he urged him, instead of waiting to be surrounded by the Irish, who would certainly renew the assault on the following morning, to fall on them at a moment when their vain confidence and want of discipline afforded such advantages to a small, but determined body of assailants. The project was instantly adopted, and executed with complete success. De

Courcey and Sir Amoric sallied from the fort at the head of five hundred men; and when they approached the enemy's camp, the horses were let loose and driven amongst them. The astonished Irish, roused from their sleep, became the unresisting victims of their assailants, and only a few hundreds escaped the slaughter. De Courcey now returned triumphant to his fort, and having received supplies of men and provisions from England, remained for some time in undisturbed possession of his conquest.

This year the English, for the first time, set hostile foot in Connaught, encouraged as in most other instances by dissensions among the native chieftains. The sons of the unfortunate Roderick O'Connor, like those of king Henry, had rebelled against him, and one of them named Murrough, invited the English to assist him. Miles de Cogan gladly embracing the proposal, marched from Dublin to Roscommon with five or six hundred men. But the people of Connaught destroyed or carried off all the provisions, and left the whole country desert before the invaders, so that they were

soon obliged to retire for want of subsistence, and leave the traitor Murrough to the resentment of his father and countrymen, who ordered his eyes to be put out. Every part of Ireland as well as Connaught, was at this time greatly distracted by the furious contentions of rival chiefs.

These continued disorders led to a change in the government. The rapacious and indolent Fitz-Andelm was re-called, and Hugh de Lacy appointed his successor. Henry, at the same time, granted the territory of Cork to Robert Fitz-Stephen and Miles de Cogan; Limerick to Philip de Bruse; Waterford, to Robert de la Poer, and a great part of Connaught to William Fitz-Andelm; and he renewed his former grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy. All these grants were to be held of the king and his son John, whom he had lately created lord of Ireland. As Cork was then held by an English garrison, Cogan and Fitz-Stephen found there a hospitable reception, and got possession of their settlements with little difficulty; but when Philip de Bruse

approached Limerick, the Irish inhabitants set it on fire; and he was so shocked at this act of determined violence, that he thought it wiser to retrace his steps than entrust himself amongst a people who had given such a signal proof of their detestation of his authority.

The government of Hugh de Lacy was marked with vigour, justice, and impartiality. He set the wise example of a coalition between the natives of the two kingdoms by marrying a daughter of Roderick O'Connor, and made considerable progress in settling and strengthening the province of Leinster, while the chivalrous John De Courcey was equally indefatigable in maintaining his conquests in Ulster against the almost incessant attacks of the natives. In the year 1178, he fought one of those romantic battles in the county of Louth for which his life was so celebrated. A ship of his laden with provisions and ammunition, having been driven by stress of weather into a creek near the town of Newry, was plundered by a chieftain named O'Hanlon, who also put the crew to death. When De Courcey heard of this, he

marched with a thousand men to Newry, where he learned, that the Irish to the amount of six thousand, were encamped near Dundalk. He continued his march till he came within a mile and a-half of the enemy, when Sir Amoric St. Lawrence, observing their vast superiority in point of number, employed a stratagem for deceiving them with regard to the force of their opponents. A friar went secretly from the English camp, who told the Irish commander, that Sir Hugh De Lacy had arrived at Drogheda, and was in full march against them with a large army. De Courcey and his followers, at the same moment, advanced in the greatest apparent confidence and security, and the Irish, completely deceived, fled towards the river. Thither they were pursued, and numbers of them slain by the English, who, discovering a ford, crossed over, and continued the pursuit on the opposite side, till the flight of the Irish being stopped by an arm of the sea, they turned on their assailants, and a furious combat took place, in which De Courcey and Sir Amoric St. Lawrence had some marvellous

escapes. Great numbers fell, though with little advantage to either side, and when the battle closed, the Irish retired to the Fews, and the English to Dundalk.

Great comparative tranquillity reigned in Ireland during the first four years of the wise government of De Lacy, with the exception of the province of Connaught, which was kept in such a state of dreadful hostility by the rebellious sons of Roderick, that sixteen young lords, heirs of the ruling families of that province, are said to have fallen in one battle. But in 1182, Munster was again threatened with civil war by an act of treachery of the basest description. Fitz-Stephen and Miles de Cogan had, during some years, enjoyed peaceable possession of their lands in Desmond, and their conciliating conduct towards the natives having apparently reconciled the latter to the new settlers, both parties mingled together with the utmost confidence. Miles de Cogan, having occasion to hold a conference with the citizens of Waterford, went to Lismore, where the interview was appointed to take place, accompanied

by a son of Fitz-Stephen, who had married his daughter. They had been invited to lodge at the house of an Irishman named Mac Tyrid, with whom they had been on particular habits of friendship. But this perfidious wretch meditated the destruction of his guests at the very moment of his hospitable invitation; and while they reposed in full security under his roof, he and his associates assassinated Cogan and his son-in-law, with five of their attendants. Mac Tyrid then flew to his countrymen, and boasting of his exploit, excited them to rise against the foreigners. The prince of Desmond instantly flew to arms, and laid siege to Cork, where Fitz-Stephen, overwhelmed with grief by the murder of his son and his friend, had to provide for his defence against an enemy vastly superior in number, and resolved on his destruction. He acquainted his nephew Raymond le Gross, who was then stationed in Wexford, with his distressing situation; and that brave commander soon entered the river Lee with twenty knights and one hundred bowmen. A successful sally, and the terror

of his name, quickly compelled the men of Desmond to raise the siege; and their chief shortly after sued for and obtained conditions of peace: this was the last military exploit of the valiant Raymond le Gross. His rival, Hervey of Mountmorres, became, about this time, a monk, and founded the celebrated abbey of Dunbrody, in the county of Wexford. During the siege of Cork, grief and fatigue had deprived the unhappy Fitz-Stephen of his reason, and thus in twelve years the first race of the English adventurers became extinct.

King Henry to supply these losses, sent over a fresh body of chosen troops under the command of Richard Cogan, the brother of Miles, and Philip Barry. But he at the same time, with unaccountable folly, removed Lacy from a government which he had so wisely administered, and appointed as his successor, Philip de Bruse, whose sole object seemed to be to amass wealth. For this purpose he made inroads into the country on the most trifling pretences, and oppressed and plundered the

people in the most shameful manner. He marched through Meath and Ulster at the head of a large body of troops, and the city of Armagh was a particular object of his rapacity. Here he spent six days in revelling and feasting, while he extorted large sums from the clergy, and the inhabitants were subjected to the lawless pillage of his ferocious soldiery. But the duration of this odious tyranny was short, as Henry with a degree of levity which we could not have expected from a prince reputed so wise, resolved to entrust the reins of the Irish government to his son John, who was then a boy in his fifteenth year; supposing, probably, that the dignity of his rank and the splendour of his train would supply the want of those qualifications, so necessary for regulating the affairs of a divided and discontented people.

Previous to his embarkation for Ireland, king Henry conferred on his son the honour of knighthood; and at the same time a legate arrived from the pope, who presented to the young viceroy a curious diadem of peacock's

feathers, interwoven with gold, and hallowed by the benediction of the sovereign pontiff. Prince John soon after left his father's court, and landed at Waterford on the 1st of April, 1185, attended by a splendid troop of young Normans, luxurious, insolent, and profligate. Glanville, a lawyer of great eminence, accompanied the prince as his chief adviser, and he was also attended by several grave and dignified ecclesiastics. The well-affected among the Irish chieftains were flattered by the appointment of a royal chief governor, while the refractory were terrified by the magnificent representation of his force; and all, with few exceptions, made preparations to congratulate his arrival.

The chieftains of Leinster quickly flocked to Waterford, to do obeisance to the young prince. But when they entered the court circle, their dress and appearance instantly became a subject of astonishment and ridicule to the proud Norman lords, though perhaps not less graceful than their own. The habiliments of the Irish chieftains consisted, at that time, of

a trowsers made of weft, striped, or divided with various colours, not unlike those worn by the Scottish highlanders at the present day; a shirt of woollen or linen dyed yellow, which was folded about the body, and made fast by a girdle round the loins; an upper garment, which reached to the middle of the thigh, and was fastened on the breast by a clasp or brooch of gold or silver; and, over all, a mantle of scarlet cloth, bordered with a silken or woollen fringe. The head was covered by a conical cap, not unlike that of our present grenadiers; and on the feet they wore shoes of half-tanned leather, consisting of a single sole from toe to heel. They cherished the beard with peculiar care, and took extraordinary pride in the hair of their heads, which they threw back from the forehead, and allowed to flow about the neck in what they called glibbs. The dress of the Normans differed little from the court dress of the present day, except that they wore a cloak, fastened on the right shoulder by a button, and a bonnet instead of a hat on the head.

Regardless of their unfashionable appear-

ance, the Irish lords advanced through the glittering circle, and, according to the national custom, proceeded to embrace the young prince; but the courtiers, incensed at what they ignorantly supposed to be rudeness, thrust them away; and then, with peals of laughter, plucked their glibbs and beards, and committed various other indignities on the persons of their guests and allies. The chieftains instantly quitted the court, and returned to their several places of residence, boiling with indignation at the treatment which they had received; and they quickly spread the flame of discontent among the princes of Munster and Connaught, who were also on the point of proceeding to do homage to the English prince. The unjust and arrogant conduct of the new adventurers soon fanned this flame into open insurrection. The castles of Tipperary, Ardfinnan, and Lismore, were attacked by the Irish; and Robert Barry, with his whole troop, was put to the sword. Robert de la Poer, and two other English lords, were also slain. Cork was on the point of falling into the hands

of Mac Arthy of Desmond, but was saved by the valour of Theobald Fitz Walter, the ancestor of the Ormond family, who slew that chief, with his whole party. During these commotions, the whole country was devastated, and the only effectual opposition the natives experienced was from the original adventurers; as the heavy arms of the Norman knights were neither calculated to repel sudden and desultory attacks, nor to pursue the natives into their fastnesses: after some unsuccessful attempts against their invaders, these gay soldiers secured themselves in their fortified towns, where they lived in riot, while the open country was a universal scene of havock and confusion.

In less than a year, king Henry saw his folly in committing the government of Ireland to such wanton and imbecile hands, and he determined to recal the giddy viceroy. But he found it no easy task to choose a successor adequate to the present exigency, for the wise and vigorous De Lacy had lately been cut off by the hands of an assassin. After he had re-

signed the cares of government, he retired to his possessions in Meath, where he devoted all his energies to the erection of forts for their security. It was his practice to oversee the labourers, amongst whom were many of his Irish tenants, and as an example and encouragement to diligence, he sometimes handled the spade and the pick-axe himself. He was proceeding in the erection of one of these forts at a place called Durrow or Derwath, on the site of an ancient abbey, which the Irish considered such a horrible profanation, that while Lacy was engaged in the trenches, one of the labourers drew a battle-axe from under his mantle, and with one blow, cleft his head in two, and the murderer, favoured by his countrymen, effected his escape. This event, which was considered by the natives a just punishment of Lacy's sacrilege, inspired the insurgents every where with fresh vigour, and such was the threatening aspect of affairs at the beginning of 1186, that Henry selected John De Courcey as the fittest person to govern Ireland at such a crisis. The robust and boisterous valour of this

distinguished chieftain soon struck terror into the insurgents, and checked their inroads on the English province. For some time he wisely abstained from all offensive operations, while the Irish in the different provinces were weakening themselves by intestine quarrels. In Connaught the unnatural sons of the unfortunate Roderick O'Connor, compelled him at length to resign his nominal authority, and to take refuge in the abbey of Cong, while his son Connor, placed himself on the throne of Connaught. This event furnishing De Courcey with a pretext for invading that province, he entered it at the head of the greater part of his English forces. But before he had penetrated far into the country, he learned that Connor, the new sovereign, and Donald More, the prince of Thomond, were assembling an army much superior to his own; and who, by their long continued hostilities with the English, had become much improved in discipline. He instantly adopted the prudent resolution of retracing his steps; but he had only commenced his retreat when he learned that ano-

ther powerful army was advantageously posted to oppose his progress in that direction, and he was compelled to return to his former camp. He had scarcely reached it, when the united army of Munster and Connaught appeared in sight, and no other alternative remained to De Courcey, but to fight his passage through a host of enemies. This he effected with his usual valour, but with the loss of many of his bravest knights, and the Irish princes were contented with the glory of driving the English viceroy from the province.

The success which had attended the united efforts of the sovereigns of Connaught and Thomond, encouraged the Northern chieftains to engage in a similar confederacy for the expulsion of the foreigners from their province. They made some successful incursions into the English settlements; but their career was soon checked by the vigour of De Courcey, who overthrew the confederates in several encounters, in which Hugh O'Loghlin, king of Tyrone, O'Molruan, prince of Fermanagh, and O'Carrol, the chieftain of Louth, were amongst

the slain. He then marched againt Armagh which he pillaged and burned, and these energetic proceedings restored temporary tranquillity to the province. Had the sovereign of Connaught advanced to the assistance of the Ulster princes, hostilities in that quarter might have had a different termination, but sanguinary dissensions had broken out among the sons of the deposed Roderick. Connor, the reigning sovereign, was put to death by one of his brothers, who in turn, was slain by one of Connor's sons. Cathal, surnamed *Crov-dearg*, or the Bloody-Handed, another son of Roderick, was now placed on the vacant throne, and proved to be one of the most active and vigilant enemies which the English power had experienced since its establishment in the island.

The year 1189 was rendered remarkable by the death of king Henry II. who was esteemed one of the greatest and wisest monarchs of the age in which he lived. Yet it must be confessed, that however conspicuous his policy may appear in establishing his authority in

Ireland, little wisdom was manifested in his subsequent mode of governing the country. The difficulties of his perturbed reign was the probable reason of his not making an effectual conquest of the island, and his temper rendered him habitually jealous of every man who possessed talents or energy to extend the English power or influence. He appears to have contented himself with the barren title of lord of Ireland, while to his successors he bequeathed the arduous task of reconciling the deadly animosities of two races of men, embittered against each other by a sanguinary struggle of twenty years. How fallacious was the hope! More than six centuries have since rolled by, yet the two races still view each other with jealousy and distrust—and Ireland can scarcely yet be called an integral member of the British empire.

CHAPTER XI.

Accession of Richard Cœur De Lion—Hugh De Lacy the younger, Chief Governor—Cathal the Bloody Handed, Sovereign of Connaught—Battle of Collis Victoriæ—Heroic Death of Sir Amoric St. Lawrence—William Earl Marshal, Chief Governor—Death of Roderick O'Connor, and Richard I.—Accession of John—Meyler Fitz-Henry, Chief Governor—Ambitious proceedings of William de Burgo in Connaught—Subdued by Meyler Fitz-Henry—Dissensions between De Courcey and De Lacy—De Courcey committed to the Tower—Story of his Rencounter with the French Champion—Black Monday—King John's Disputes with the Barons—Sufferings of William De Bruse and his family—Banishment and Return of the Lacys—Death of King John.

RICHARD I. (surnamed *Cœur-de-Lion,)* now succeeded to the extensive dominions of his

father, king Henry, in England, France and Ireland; but his romantic valour leading him to seek laurels in the Holy Land, which during the period of the Crusades, was the ultimate ambition of all the crowned heads of Europe, he resolved to rid himself of the unprofitable charge of the Irish government by confirming his father's grant to John, who was now styled Earl of Moreton, and Lord of Ireland; and the speedy departure of the king to the wars of Palestine, left in the hands of that prince all the authority connected with it.

His first act of government was to appoint Hugh De Lacy the younger to the office of viceroy, in the room of De Courcey, who had so gloriously retrieved the falling fortunes of his country. The veteran retired to his own settlements in Ulster; and the Irish chieftains sensible of the great advantage they had gained by this change of government, once more took the field. Cathal the Bloody-Handed, the new sovereign of Connaught, was now looked up to by the natives as their chief hope, as he had manifested an extraordinary passion for

military glory, and a determined abhorrence of the foreigners. Not only his own provincials promised unbounded support to his efforts for restoring independence to his country, but the princes of Thomond and Desmond, with the inferior chiefs of Munster, cordially embraced his alliance.

The confederates speedily raised a force of twenty thousand men, with which Cathal proposed to drive the English out of Ulster. Alarmed for the security of his settlements De Courcey called to his aid his long-tried friend and counsellor Sir Amoric St. Lawrence, who was then engaged in some petty enterprize. The brave knight obeyed the summons at the head of two hundred and thirty chosen warriors. Their route lying partly through Connaught, Cathal obtained intelligence of their motions, and placed an overwhelming force in ambush to intercept them. The English marched without suspicion into the snare which was laid for them, and at the first sight of their antagonists, their vast superiority took away all hope of a successful struggle—yet the thought

of surrender to such a mind as that of Sir Amoric was worse than death. The love of life led the cavalry for a moment to resolve on trusting to the fleetness of their horses, and leaving the infantry to their fate; but Sir Nicholas St. Lawrence conjured them not to abandon their fellow-soldiers, whom they had so often bravely supported, to the fury of their implacable foes. Sir Amoric gave instant effect to his brother's exhortations by springing from his horse; then kneeling down for a moment, he kissed the cross of his sword, and plunged it into the noble animal, exclaiming, "thou shalt never serve against me that so worthily hast served with me." All the cavalry followed the example, and Sir Amoric, after viewing for a moment his brave associates with a cheerful countenance, ordered the two youngest of their body to retire to the top of a neighbouring hill, there to witness the engagement, and bear a faithful report to John De Courcey. He then exhorted his followers to meet boldly, with their weapons in their hands, that death which was now inevitable,

rather than stain their honour by a base surrender. Thus saying, the valiant knight and his band of heroes rushed forward with the firmness and composure of men determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Their first onset was so terrible, that Cathal supposed they must have received a reinforcement; but the paucity of their numbers soon corrected his mistake, and the English quickly found themselves assailed on all sides. Being in complete armour, they sustained repeated assaults before they could be wounded: but overwhelming numbers, at length, prevailed, and Sir Amoric with the whole of his gallant band, fell in this desperate contest, not one deigning to survive the carnage. Though this victory is said to have cost Cathal a thousand men, he founded an abbey on the field of battle which he called *Collis Victoriæ*.

Ireland was at this time in a dreadful state of confusion, not only from the powerful confederacy of the Irish chieftains, but from the depredations of gangs of robbers in various quarters, of whom Little John, the well known

companion of the celebrated Robin Hood, is said to have been the leader. To add to the general distress, the city of Dublin was nearly destroyed by an accidental fire, and the generally calamitous state of the country called for a government of extraordinary wisdom and vigor. William, earl Marshal of England, was accordingly selected, not only on account of the dignity of his rank and character, but because of the large possessions which he had acquired in Ireland by his marriage with the daughter of earl Strongbow and the princess of Leinster. Finding the country a prey to the most dreadful confusion, he took immediate measures for stemming the progress of insurrection. O'Brien of Thomond, encouraged by the success of the sovereign of Connaught, had commenced hostilities against the English, whom he defeated at Thurles: but the death of the gallant Donald O'Brien at this juncture enabled the latter to retaliate by ravaging North Munster, and once more capturing Limerick. They also erected several forts for the protection of their settlements; but these were soon razed to

the ground by the vigorous Cathal, who marched with a large army to the assistance of his Munster allies. At the same time Mac Arthy of Desmond drove the English out of Limerick, and being soon after joined by Cathal with the Connaught troops and some forces from Ulster, under the chief of the house of O'Neill, he compelled the garrison of Cork to capitulate.

By this event, the English lost their last place of strength in Munster, and they maintained their authority in Leinster with the greatest difficulty; while in Ulster and Meath De Courcey and Lacy had assumed the port of independent sovereigns. In the mean time earl Marshal was removed from the government to give place to Hamo de Valois, a Norman lord, who quickly became involved in serious difficulties with the clergy, by attempting to seize their lands to supply the necessities of the state. In 1198 in the midst of all this disorder, Roderick O'Connor, the last monarch of Ireland, departed this life in his ninetieth year, at the monastery of Cong. That he lived so long is matter of wonder, when we consi-

der that few sovereigns ever more signally experienced the unsatisfactory and unstable nature of human greatness. He ascended the throne under circumstances peculiarly brilliant; but these were soon overclouded by the united horrors of intestine commotion and foreign invasion. Compelled to retire discomfited from the contest, his latter years were embittered by the rebellious conduct of his unnatural sons; and even his seclusion in a convent did not secure him from the agony of hearing of their cruel dissensions. He left the world at a moment when a gleam of hope might have illumined his dying hour, that his country was about to recover her independence; but as he had long ceased to be an actor on the stage of life, his death was quickly forgotten as an incident of little importance.

In the year 1199 king Richard I. after marvellous exploits and escapes in the Holy Land, died of a mortal wound which he received at the siege of the castle of Chalux in Acquitaine. John earl of Moreton immediately usurped the crown of England in prejudice of his nephew,

prince Arthur, the son of an elder brother, and commenced a reign both unhappy and inglorious. Amidst the cares and difficulties in which he soon found himself involved, he did not, however, wholly neglect the affairs of Ireland. He recalled the rapacious Hamo de Valois from the government, and replaced him by Meyler Fitz-Henry, a natural son of king Henry I. who was one of the most distinguished of the original adventurers. But this wise and vigorous governor, had to undertake a task of no ordinary difficulty, with little aid from his sovereign, and a probability of being opposed rather than supported by many of the English lords. De Courcey had openly impeached John's title to the crown, and refused to yield him his allegiance, while Lacy entered into treaties with the neighbouring Irish chieftains, and assisted in their local contests. Perceiving the great importance of fixing the English power in Munster on a solid basis, king John had renewed the former grant of Thomond to Philip De Bruse, and William his son, excepting the city of Limerick, which with cer-

tain territories formerly granted in Connaught, he committed to the custody of William De Burgo, who marched into Munster at the head of a formidable army, and acted with such vigour, that he soon possessed himself of Limerick, and formed there an English settlement which, from that period, defied all the power of the Irish, owing chiefly to the dissensions that prevailed in the O'Brien family since the death of the famous Donald More. After this De Burgo marched into Connaught, where espousing the cause of Carragh O'Connor, an aspirer to the sovereignty, who promised to invest him with all the lands which had been granted to him by the king of England, he compelled Cathal to fly from the province. The exiled prince sought the protection of O'Neill of Tyrone, and through his influence a confederacy was formed to which even De Courcey and Lacy united their forces; and now was seen the extraordinary spectacle of English lords engaged against each other in the local contentions of the natives. But they had scarcely taken the field when De Burgo

and Carragh marched against the invaders, and routed them with great slaughter.

Inflated by this career of success, De Burgo forgot his allegiance to the crown of England, made war and peace by his own proper authority, and established in Limerick the seat of his power, from whence he carried his hostile arms alternately into Munster and Connaught. He made himself the arbiter in the affairs of the O'Brien family, and having listened to the insinuations of Cathal, the deposed sovereign of Connaught, he now espoused his cause against his rival Carragh, whom he defeated and slew in the field. But Cathal, when restored to his authority, refused to gratify all the rapacious views of the English chief, who having recourse to arms for his redress, was driven to a precipitate flight from the superior forces of the sovereign whom he had just restored, after losing seven hundred of his men. Yet the spirit of De Burgo was unbroken, for having recruited his army in Limerick, he made a fresh inroad into Connaught, which he filled with slaughter and devastation, and put to

death two youths of the house of O'Connor whom he found in a college at Mayo. But from this sanguinary career he was recalled by the approach of an enemy more formidable than any whom he had yet encountered.

Alarmed at the frantic proceedings of this ambitious chieftain, Meyler Fitz-Henry had raised a considerable army, with which he marched from Dublin to Limerick, the scene of his early prowess, to chastise the disloyalty of its revolted governor. On his route he was reinforced by the troops of Cathal of Connaught, and O'Brien of Thomond, and for the first time an English viceroy was seen at the head of the native Irish, marching against his own countrymen. The siege was speedily formed by an army which De Burgo felt himself unable to resist, and he immediately capitulated and returned to his allegiance. The viceroy seized the opportunity of entering into a regular treaty with his Irish confederates, who seemed heartily weary of the distractions of civil warfare, in which the prince of Thomond made large concessions, and Cathal agreed

to surrender two parts of Connaught to the king, and pay one hundred marks annually for the third as the king's vassal.

In the year 1203, the English barons of Ireland were generally united with their brethren of England, in detestation of the conduct of their sovereign, particularly with regard to the death of his nephew prince Arthur. The artless temper of Sir John De Courcey, led him to express his feelings in terms of the bitterest indignation, and the more crafty and temporising De Lacy, whowas jealous of the growing power of this lord, conveyed secret intelligence of his indiscretion to the king. Stung almost to madness by De Courcey's reproach, the English monarch commanded him immediately to repair to England to do him homage for his earldom of Ulster; but De Courcey treating the royal mandate with contempt, Hugh and Walter De Lacy were commissioned to seize the refractory baron, and send him prisoner to London. They proceeded with alacrity at the head of a considerable force to execute their trust, but De Courcey after a sanguinary

battle fought at Down, defeated his rivals, and chased them with disgrace from his territories. De Lacy now denounced his antagonist as a traitor and rebel, and offered a large reward to any one who would seize and surrender him alive or dead; and at the same time secretly practised with some of the earl's attendants, who by the promise of a large bribe were induced to betray their master. While De Courcey, who combined in his character a spirit of the most chivalrous valour with an ardent devotion, was in the act of performing penance on Good Friday, by walking barefooted round the church-yard of Down, his perfidious servants took advantage of his defenceless state, and rushed upon their unsuspecting master. Two of his nephews, the sons of the brave Sir Amoric St. Lawrence, flew to his aid; and the earl himself, seizing a wooden cross which lay in the church-yard, wielded this singular weapon with such gigantic force, that he is said to have slain thirteen of his assailants. But his faithful nephews having fallen in the conflict, he was at length overpowered by the survivors, who

brought him a prisoner to his implacable enemy, by whom he was transmitted to England. His betrayers now demanded the reward of their perfidy; but De Lacy who abhorred the traitors as much as he loved the treason, paid them their hire, and then ordered them to be hanged.

In the mean time the heroic De Courcey was condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the Tower of London, from which, according to the English annalists, he was delivered a few years after by the following singular incident. King John being at this time in Normandy, a dispute arose between him and Philip, king of France, about some fortified town, and, as was the frequent practice of that age, it was agreed to decide it by single combat. Much as John hated De Courcey, he knew that he had no knight in his dominions on whose strength and prowess he could so fully depend. When solicited by a sovereign from whose tyranny he had suffered so much, to engage in his quarrel, he at first refused; but on being informed that the honor of his country was at stake, he said,

on that account, and not for the king, he would undertake the matter. He then desired that his own sword might be brought from Ireland, and the rigors of his confinement being softened and his strength restored by due care and nourishment, he departed soon after for Normandy. The particulars of this singular combat are thus quaintly given in one of our old chronicles :—

" The day came, the place and lists were appointed, and the scaffolds were set up. The princes, with their nobility on both sides, waited the issue of the battle. The French champion first sallied forth, gave a turn, and rested himself in his tent. De Courcey was sent for, who was trussing himself up with strong points, and answered the messengers that if any of their company were to go to such a banquet, he would make no great haste. He soon after came forth, gave a turn, and went into his tent. When the trumpets sounded the charge, the champions issued out, and viewed each other. De Courcey eyed his adversary with a wonderful stern countenance,

and passed by. The Frenchman, not liking his grim look, and the strong proportion of his person, stalked still along; and when the trumpets sounded to battle a second time, De Courcey drew his sword; upon which the Frenchman clapped spurs to his horse, broke through the barrier, and fled into Spain; whereupon they sounded victory, the people threw up their caps, and clapped their hands. King Philip desired king John, that De Courcey might be called before him, to show some proof of his strength. A stake was set in the ground, and a shirt of mail and an helmet placed thereon: De Courcey drew his sword, looked wonderfully stern upon the princes, and cleft the helmet, shirt of mail, and stake so far, that none could pull out the weapon but himself. The princes then asked him, why he looked so sour at them? He said, if he had missed his blow, he would have cut off both their heads; but all was taken in good part. King John gave him great gifts, and restored him to his former possessions. After this he sailed for Ireland, and was several times, by contrary winds, put back to West Chester,

in his attempt to pass into that kingdom, upon which he altered his course, went into France, and there died." This extraordinary man is said to have possessed an estate of twenty-five thousand marks annually, a vast sum in those days. Besides restoring him to his former possessions, the king offered him any thing else within his gift; to which De Courcey answered, that he had titles and estate enough, but desired that he and the heirs male of his family might be permitted to be covered in the presence of the king and his successors, a privilege which is enjoyed by his posterity to the present day.—On the death of De Courcey, however, the faithless and capricious monarch transferred his earldom of Ulster to Hugh De Lacy, to the prejudice of the claims of Milo, the son of the deceased earl. This vast accession to their power, swelled the pride of this ambitious family to an inordinate height, and they carried their inveteracy against their late rival to such a length, that they are said to have procured the assassination of the lord of Raheny, a natural son of De Courcey.

The vigorous government of Meyler Fitz-Henry having generally kept the Irish chieftains in awe, he found leisure in the year 1208 to commence the building of the castle of Dublin. But the country was still dreadfully infested by gangs of outlaws, who carried their depredations to the very walls of the capital. On Monday in Easter-week, 1209, an event occurred which spread distress and lamentation through the city. It was the custom of the citizens at that season of festivity, to repair to Cullen's-wood, a short distance from Dublin, there to amuse themselves with rural pastimes. While thus engaged in recreation some mountain septs of Wicklow rushed on them, unarmed and defenceless as they were, and slew three hundred of their number. From this horrible massacre the anniversary of the day was ever after denominated Black Monday, and for several centuries, on Easter Monday, the dreadful event was commemorated by the mayor, sheriffs, and citizens of Dublin. Tents were pitched in Cullen's-wood, a joyous feast ensued, and in the midst of the banquet an

imaginary enemy was publicly defied by mimic heralds, and warned at his peril to forbear from disturbing their revelry. The singing boys of the cathedral were afterwards deputed to deliver this mock challenge, and the choir was annually regaled at the wood of Culleu.

King John appeared at this time well disposed to make some efforts to promote the welfare of his subjects in Ireland, but his good intentions were frustrated by the difficulties in which he was involved by his contests with the pope and the barons of England, and his vindictive jealousy was ever kept alive by apprehensions of conspiracies. This feeling extended to his barons in Ireland. He denounced his vengeance against the overgrown power of the Lacys, and his fury was increased by the following circumstance.

Among the nobles from whom he demanded hostages was William de Braosa, or Bruse, lord of Brecknock, who had lately taken possession of his grants in North Munster. When the king's messengers arrived for this purpose, Matilda, the wife of de Bruse, told them with

indiscreet severity, that her children should never be entrusted to the man who had murdered his own nephew. Though de Bruse reproved his wife for her intemperate language, and promised obedience to the king's mandate, vengeance was denounced against him, and orders being issued to seize his lands and castles, and to secure his person, De Bruse fled to Ireland with his wife and children, and was protected by Hugh de Lacy. To punish these chieftains was the reason which this imbecile but vindictive prince assigned for his expedition to this country in 1210; but the Lacys and de Bruse fled to France, while the wife of the latter with her children took refuge in Scotland: there, however, they were seized by one of John's secret agents, and sent prisoners to the castle of Bristol. The unfortunate lady is said to have made the most humiliating concessions to the enraged tyrant; and we are told that she sought the mediation of the queen by an offer of the extraordinary present of four hundred kine, all milk white except the ears, which were red. But John

proved unrelenting, and the unhappy Matilda with her unoffending children were kept in prison till they perished by want.

More than twenty Irish chieftains did homage to the king of England after his landing in Dublin, among whom were Cathal, the sovereign of Connaught, and O'Neill of Tyrone. Having brought with him some able lawyers, he now proceeded to give to his subjects in Ireland a more perfect code of laws than they had yet enjoyed; and for their more regular execution he established courts of justice in Dublin, and made a more ample division of the king's lands into counties. He gave orders for a coinage of money, which should pass current in both countries, and leaving the government in the hands of John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, he returned to England.

Hugh and Walter De Lacy, after their flight, underwent many hardships in France; but in the end they were more fortunate than poor William De Bruse. They are said to have been reduced so low as to follow the occupation of gardeners in the service of the

abbot of St. Taurin for two years. The abbot suspecting, at length, from the superiority of their manners to those of common labourers, that they could not be men of ordinary rank, enquired respecting their former situation in life, and they freely disclosed to him their real history. The good abbot, affected by the recital of their misfortunes, engaged to become their mediator with the king of England, and he finally succeeded in having the Lacys restored to their possessions, on condition that Hugh should pay four thousand marks for his lands in Ulster, and Walter two thousand five hundred for Meath.

The remainder of the reign of John was fully occupied by his turmoils with the pope and his barons, which ultimately led to his degrading submission to the former, and his grant of the famous Magna Charta at the field of Runnymede to the latter. The distractions of the English government during this period, afforded a fair opportunity to the Irish chieftains to assert their independence; but

the O'Briens, O'Neills, and O'Connors, had so enfeebled their strength by their local and provincial disputes, that they were now in no condition to embrace it.

CHAPTER XII.

Accession of Henry III.—Geoffry de Maurisco, Chief Governor—Sanguinary Hostilities in Connaught—Maurice Fitz-Gerald, Lord Offaley, Chief Governor— Arbitrary proceedings of Hubert De Burgo—Rash project and tragical Death of Richard Earl of Pembroke—Rise of the great power of the Geraldines—Story of Thomas Fitz-Gerald Nappagh—Death of Henry III.—Accession of Edward I.—Hostilities between Thomas De Clare and the O'Briens—Battle of Magh Gressain.—Quarrel between De Vesey, the Chief Governor, and John Lord Offaley.—Vigorous Government of Sir John Wogan.

HENRY III. commenced his reign A. D. 1216 (being then but nine years old,) under the guardianship of William Marshal earl of

Pembroke. During the life of this wise and vigorous nobleman, Ireland enjoyed considerable tranquillity under the joint administration of Geoffrey De Maurisco and Henry De Loundres, archbishop of Dublin. This prelate, who completed the castle of Dublin, had been present with Walter De Lacy at Runnymede, at the granting of Magna Charta. But the death of the great earl of Pembroke in 1219, proved the signal for fresh commotions. Hugh De Lacy forming an alliance with O'Neill of Tyrone, spread desolation through Leinster, while Geoffrey De Maurisco was called into Munster to suppress an insurrection of the Mac Arthys of Desmond. A fresh grant of Thomond was made to O'Brien at a yearly rent; but with less equity, king Henry conferred the whole of Connaught on Richard De Burgo, the son of its first successful invader, in contravention of the treaty with Cathal the Bloody-Handed; though De Burgo did not assert his claim till after the death of Cathal which occurred in 1228. This province now became a scene of sanguinary violence between

Turlough, the brother, and Ædh, the son of the late sovereign, in which the latter was slain. But Turlough found a more powerful rival in Fedhlim, another son of Cathal, who resolutely resisted De Burgo's claims. The latter commenced hostilities against him, and took him prisoner; but Fedhlim having the good fortune to escape, marched against Turlough, slew him, and re-assumed his sovereignty. Fortunately for this enterprising prince, Hubert De Burgo, the justiciary of England, had about this time, fallen into disgrace; and his kinsman, Fedhlim's great adversary, was removed from the Irish government to give place to Maurice Fitz-Gerald, lord of Offaley, grandson of the celebrated companion of Strongbow. Encouraged by these circumstances, Fedhlim appealed to the monarch of England, and soon after passed over to that country. He was received by king Henry with all the respect due to his rank; and the king was so touched with the pathetic recital of his grievances, that he commanded the lord justice of Ireland to use all his efforts to re-establish him in his territory.

The fall of the De Burgos was occasioned by an event, which well nigh involved the two countries in the flames of civil war. William earl of Pembroke, who died in 1231, was succeeded by his brother Richard, a young nobleman of an independent and impetuous character. When he demanded possession of his lands, the king and Hubert De Burgo, apprehensive of the effects which might flow from his obtaining such an accession of power, denied it, at first, on pretence that his brother's wife was pregnant; and after the fallacy of this device was discovered, on a charge that he had held a treasonable correspondence with the king's enemies in France. Being ordered to quit the kingdom within fifteen days, earl Richard instantly directed his course towards Ireland, where, being descended on the one side from an Irish king, and on the other from the celebrated Strongbow, his family was reverenced by the inhabitants of Leinster, both of the Irish and English race. He was received with the cordiality which he had expected; and being invested with all his

lands and estates in Ireland, he soon after returned to Wales with a considerable force, took possession of the castle of Pembroke, and appeared determined to assert his patrimonial claims by arms.

Alarmed at these vigorous proceedings, the timid Henry acceded to the demands of the earl, and invested him with all his rights. Encouraged by this first success, he now boldly remonstrated with the king on the tyrannical conduct of his favorite minister, and the inundation of foreigners which had overspread the land; and he, with many other peers, among whom was the king's brother, declared that they would no longer deign to attend the royal council, while the insolent and contemptible Poitevins were allowed to engross the king's favour and attention. Earl Richard and his associates were soon after summoned to parliament; but declaring that they were apprehensive of their personal safety, they refused to obey the mandate: upon which they were immediately proclaimed traitors, and their lands assigned to foreigners. But the influence of Hubert

was still sufficient to draw off the other lords from the confederacy, and earl Richard was left alone to maintain a desperate contest with his sovereign. Still, however, disdaining to submit, he retired into Wales, where he formed an alliance with Llewelyn, the prince of that country, and declared his resolution to defend his lands and estates against hostile attack. Every attempt to reduce this powerful lord being attended with disgrace to the king's arms, Henry, at length, marched in person against him; but earl Richard with an affected reverence, declined to take any part in the engagement. All his countrymen made prisoners in battle he treated with lenity, but he gave no quarter to foreigners. Through his successful opposition the flame of discontent began again to spread among the English peers and prelates; and they besought the king to check the progress of disorder by a just redress of grievances, but all their remonstrances were treated with contempt by the imperious minister.

Finding that his efforts to reduce the refractory

earl by force proved unavailing, the crafty Hubert soon concerted a plan for his destruction, which from his impetuous temper, he had but too much reason to hope, would prove successful. He directed letters under the king's seal to Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the chief governor of Ireland, the two Lacys, Geoffry De Maurisco, Richard De Burgo, and other lords, signifying, that Richard, late earl Marshal and Pembroke, had for his manifest treason, been deprived of his estates, and banished from the realm; and directing them, if he should land in Ireland, to endeavour to secure and send him to the king, dead or alive; in return for which service, all his lands in Ireland were to be divided amongst them and their heirs for ever.

Whether prompted by zeal for the king's service, or allured by the temptation of the rich reward, these lords took an effectual method to ensnare their devoted victim. Private intelligence having been conveyed to him that the barons of Ireland had seized some of his castles, the impetuous earl embraced the oppor-

tunity, which a suspension of hostilities in Wales afforded to him, of embarking with only fifteen attendants, as he expected ample support from his vassals in this country. He was greeted on his landing by Geoffry De Maurisco, who affected to commiserate his wrongs, and applauded his efforts against injustice and oppression. He even insinuated, that with the support of his innumerable adherents he might subdue all Ireland, by a due exercise of that vigour which he inherited from his illustrious progenitors. Thus flattered, he hastily collected some forces, and having recovered all his castles in Leinster, he entered Munster, and took possession of Limerick, after a siege of four days. During this career of conquest, De Burgo and the Lacys fled before him with affected terror, till they had completely drawn him into their toils. Some of their agents then told him, that as liege-men to king Henry, they could no longer tamely look on and see the lands devastated which the king had committed to their custody; but to prevent the effusion of blood, they demanded a

truce; and engaged, that if not speedily succoured by the king, they should consider him as relinquishing his power and authority in the island, and would then peaceably resign it to earl Richard, with whom they desired an interview on the Curragh of Kildare to adjust the terms of the truce. The earl of Pembroke appeared at the place of meeting, attended by a force nearly equal to that of his opponents; but by the insidious advice of Geoffry, he haughtily refused to grant a truce. The barons replied, that the contest, in that case, should be instantly decided by the sword; and the intrepid earl was nothing loath to accept the challenge; but at the moment of onset, Geoffry De Maurisco told him coldly, that he had no resource but to yield to the demands of his antagonists, for that he would not fight against Walter De Lacy, who had married his sister: he then marched off with eighty of the earl's company, who had been bribed to this act of perfidy, leaving the unfortunate nobleman with only his fifteen Welch followers to withstand the shock of one hun-

dred and forty chosen men. Yet with a romantic bravery he disdained to fly; and turning to a brother, who was of too tender years to share in so desperate an encounter, he took an affectionate farewell, and requested him to consult his safety by retiring to a neighbouring castle. The barons took no part in the unequal contest, but their followers directed their principal attack against the person of the earl. Though surrounded on every side, he made a desperate resistance, till being at length unhorsed, one of his assailants plunged a dagger in his back, where he was not defended by armour; but it is said he might have recovered, had not a villainous surgeon designedly tortured and thrown him into a burning fever, of which he died in a few days.

This tragical termination of the life of earl Richard, excited general indignation throughout England and Ireland; and such was the popular fury in the former of these countries, that in London an Irishman who indiscreetly confessed that he had a share in the transaction was instantly assassinated. Many of the

nobles expressed the greatest alarm for the safety of their own persons; while the citizens of Dublin inveighed loudly against the tyranny of the minister, and seemed ripe for insurrection. The king, terrified at this general discontent, affected the greatest sorrow and indignation at the death of the earl, and ordered his chaplains to perform a solemn service for the repose of his soul. He affirmed his total ignorance of the purport of the fatal letter to which the crafty Hubert De Burgo had compelled him to affix his seal; and that minister was ordered to appear and answer for his conduct, but he with many of his creatures fled for sanctuary to the church of Winchester. All foreigners were now removed from office, while the native lords were restored to the favour of their sovereign; and Gilbert, the brother of the unfortunate earl Richard, was invested with his lands, together with the office of earl Marshal.

During these important transactions, Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the Irish viceroy, arrived at the English court, exculpated himself by oath from

having taken any part in the death of earl Richard; and through the king's mediation, was formally reconciled to his successor. He appears to have retained his high office for fifteen years after, till 1248, when he incurred the king's displeasure for not having come to his succour in Wales with sufficient expedition. He now took up his residence in Munster, and from this period may be dated the rise of the great power of the Geraldines in that province. His son Thomas acquired vast possessions in Cork and Kerry; but in the year 1261, John his successor, met a great overthrow from the Mac Arthys, at a place called Callan, in the last mentioned county, in which he was slain, with his son Maurice, eight barons, fifteen knights, and a great number of inferior followers.

The Geraldines did not recover this severe blow for many years, as the only representative of the family that now remained was Thomas, an infant nine months old, the son of Maurice who was slain at Callan; and his singular preservation is ranked amongst the memorable events of that distinguished family. When

intelligence of the death of his father and grandfather reached the castle of Tralee, the attendants in their first panic ran out of the house, leaving the child in the cradle, whence a baboon or ape, which was kept in the family, took him to the battlements of the castle, and after shewing him for some time to the astonished and terrified spectators, brought him down safe, and laid him again in the cradle. From this circumstance we are told, the Fitz-Geralds of Kildare took the baboon for the supporters and crest of their arms; and the child thus singularly preserved, was ever after called Thomas Nappagh, or the Ape. He afterwards became so powerful a man, that he was styled prince or ruler of Munster; he filled the office of viceroy of Ireland, and was father of the first earls of Kildare and Desmond.

The latter years of the reign of Henry III. were dreadfully prolific of misery to this unfortunate country. The great lords waged frequent war with the natives, and with each other, while all parties seemed equally regardless of the king's authority. In vain did Henry com-

mand his refractory subjects to observe the laws and customs contained in the charter granted by king John: in vain did his deputies, who were sent over in quick succession, endeavour to repress these disorders. The turbulent English chieftains not only refused to yield obedience to these laws themselves, but resisted every effort of the government to extend them to the natives, many of whom sought the enjoyment of the privileges which they afforded. To augment the calamities of this melancholy period, heavy exactions were made on the people-both by the king and the pope, and dearth and disease were the natural consequences of all this confusion.

The death of Henry III. occurring in 1272, great hopes were now entertained, that the talents and vigour of his successor, Edward I. would prove highly beneficial to Ireland, by repressing that spirit of domineering ambition on the one hand, and seditious turbulence on the other, which universally prevailed. A century had elapsed since the arrival of the first adventurers from Wales; but the connexion of

this country with England had yet been productive of no advantage, except some improvement in the cultivation of the soil wherever the new settlers were established; and the same disorders continued, though under another form, which had existed under the native government. The great political and military talents of this famous prince, finding adequate employment in regulating the disordered state of England, and in carrying on an unjust war with the Welch and the Scots, Ireland was still left at the mercy of the various factions that preyed upon her vitals.

Maurice Fitz-Gerald, son of the late lord Offaley, held, at this time the vice-regal sword; but such was the weakness of the government, that in an expedition agains the insurgents of Leinster, he was betrayed by his own followers to the enemy, who committed him to prison. Glenvill, his successor, met a signal defeat from the Irish, who now menaced the capital, while Ulster was infested by frequent marauders from the Scottish isles; and all over the kingdom petty chieftains, both English and Irish, pursued

their schemes of interest and revenge in defiance of the government. After Maurice Fitz-Gerald was released from his confinement, he united with lord Theobald Butler, to make war upon the O'Briens of Thomond, for which he found an additional pretext by the marriage of his daughter with Thomas De Clare, son of the earl of Gloucester, a young lord of martial spirit, to whom king Edward had made a considerable grant in Thomond, and who now brought into Ireland a large body of forces to assert his claims. The O'Briens remonstrated against these encroachments; but De Clare, appealing to the sword, gave the Irish a signal defeat, slew their chief, and then took possession of his lands. He laid the foundation of the celebrated castle of Bunratty, in 1277, but he was not permitted to finish it without interruption. Brien O'Brien, the late prince of Thomond, had left two warlike sons, who exerted themselves with great vigour to avenge their father's death, and retrieve the honor of their family; and having received some aid from Connaught, hostilities were renewed with

augmented fury, and they terminated in the total overthrow of the new colonists at a place called Magh-Gressain. Many of their bravest knights were slaughtered; while De Clare, his father-in-law, and some other chieftains, were compelled to fly for shelter to an inaccessible mountain, where being blocked up by the Irish, they were reduced by famine to capitulate on the most mortifying terms. They acknowledged the sovereignty of the O'Briens, surrendered the castle of Roscommon into their hands, and gave hostages for the payment of the eric, or satisfaction demanded for the death of the late chieftain of Thomond. Sanguinary hostilities raged at the same time in Connaught, during which, many of the English castles fell into the hands of the natives. In these commotions the well-disposed and peaceable Irish were generally the greatest sufferers; and in 1278 they again entreated the government to grant them the full protection of the laws of England. The application was favorably received by the king; but the benevolent intentions of the monarch were still counteracted by the cruel

policy of those chieftains, who well knew that the measure, if adopted, would effectually circumscribe their rapacious views, and eventually terminate their reign of violence and oppression.

The various factions were thus abandoned to the indulgence of their barbarous passions, and to spend their rage in petty contentions for some object of rapacity or revenge, which, without attaining any national benefit, served only to desolate the districts exposed to their fury. A more systematic plan of resistance to the power of England was devised in the year 1290 by the Mac Arthys of Desmond, who, having elected Daniel Ruadh their chief, drove the English from several of their settlements, and destroyed their castles: but violent dissensions at the same time prevailing among the O'Briens, which were kept alive by De Clare, who had again resumed his authority in that quarter, the Mac Arthys relinquished their object; and their chief secretly passing into Thomond, used all his address to restrain the blind rage of his countrymen, and exhorted them

to compose their private differences, and wait patiently till the mutual rivalry and jealousy of the English should give them a fair occasion to unite, and by one effectual blow, to avenge themselves on their oppressors. The fierce contentions which raged at this time amongst the English settlers, gave weight to the arguments of Mac Arthy. In Connaught, two English leaders named Barret and Cusack were then committing dreadful devastations on the lands of each other; and in Meath, Gerald, Lord Offaley, had been defeated and imprisoned by lord Theobald Verdon, son-in-law of Walter De Lacy, while lord Geoffrey Genville had been driven from all his posssessions in that province. The death of lord Offaley with that of Thomas De Clare, who was slain in battle with Turlogh O'Brien, in 1286, left the undisputed rank of pre-eminence to Richard De Burgo, earl of Ulster. That nobleman employed his great power and influence in oppressing all who stood in the way of his insatiable ambition; and the flames of war were quickly spread throughout Meath and the

Northern province. The miseries of the wretched people were at the same time greatly augmented by the heavy exactions of the king to enable him to carry on the war against the Scots, and provide for an expedition to the Holy Land.

In the year 1290, the government of Ireland was entrusted to William De Vesey, an English lord of an enterprising and inflexible character. He gained some considerable advantages over the Irish insurgents, but in attempting to check the turbulent proceedings of the great lords, he found a formidable opponent in John Fitz-Gerald, the lord of Offaley. The most violent animosities broke out between them, De Vesey accusing Fitz-Gerald of a design to revolt from his allegiance, while the latter recriminated by charging his antagonist with uttering disloyal expressions, and various corrupt practices in the exercise of his official duties. King Edward, hearing of these contentions, summoned the rival lords to appear before him at Westminster, where Vesey preferred his accusation against the baron of Offaley. Fitz-Gerald de-

fended himself by recriminating on his adversary, and concluded a speech which affords a deplorable picture of the state of Ireland at that period, in the following words which we quote as a curious specimen of the rude eloquence then in use. "You must not think, Mr. Vesey, that you were sent into Ireland to dandle your trulls, to pen yourself within a town or city, to give the rebels the gage, to pill the subjects, and animate traitors; to fill your coffers, and to make yourself by marring true men; to gather the birds, whilst others beat the bushes; and after to impeach the nobility of such treasons as you only have committed. But forasmuch as our mutual complaints rest upon the one's yea, and the other's nay, and that you would be taken for a champion, and I am known to be no coward, let us leave lying for varlets, bearding for ruffians, facing for cacklers, chattering for twattlers, scolding for callots, booking for scriveners, pleading for lawyers, and let's try with the dint of the sword, (as becomes martial men to do) our mutual quarrels: therefore to justify

that I am a true subject, and that thou, Vesey, art an arch-traitor to God and my king, here in the presence of his highness, and in the hearing of this assembly, I challenge the combat." Upon this, says the Chronicle, Vesey fled to France, and the king pronouncing Lord Offaley innocent, conferred on him Vesey's manors and lordships of Kildare, Rathangan, &c. saying, that although he had conveyed his person into France, he had left his lands behind him in Ireland.

Fitz-Gerald now returned in triumph, and he was not slow in taking possession of his new acquisitions. His restless ambition led him soon after to attack the earl of Ulster with whom he disputed the right of some lands in Connaught, and after conquering him in the field he got possession of his person. For these violent proceedings he was formally impeached, and summoned to appear a second time before the king. But he again found means to appease the resentment of his sovereign, and after giving security for his future peaceable demeanour he was permitted to return to Ireland, and fully

justified the confidence which the king reposed in him. He was not only eminently successful in suppressing domestic insurrections, but at three several times he led considerable forces to the assistance of his sovereign in Scotland.

The administration of Sir John Wogan, which commenced in 1295, was marked with great vigour and discretion, and he was continued in his high office, at intervals, for twelve years. King Edward appeared at this time extremely anxious to adopt some effectual measures for the suppression of the spirit of factious turbulence in Ireland, and with this laudable object a parliament was convened, to which, for the first time, two knights were returned from each of the counties and liberties, as they were called. In this assembly, some enactments were passed which appeared well adapted to redress the public grievances. A more regular division of the counties was made—the lord marchers appointed for the protection of the borders, were ordered to maintain the necessary wards, on pain of forfeiting their lands; and all the tenants were commanded to furnish them-

selves with arms according to their rank—it was ordained that no lord should make war without the permission of the king or chief governor, and that he should be answerable for any depredations committed by his followers—all private truces with the Irish were forbidden, and it was ordered, that when the natives had once concluded a fair and general truce, they should not be molested by insidious hostilities. In case of a sudden insurrection, each county was bound to rise in arms, to aid the chief governor in its suppression, and two lords were appointed in every county and liberty, with full power to make such stipulations with the natives as should secure their district from molestation. As many English subjects were now in the habit of adopting the dress and customs of the Irish to escape the penalties of the English laws, this practice was strictly prohibited. But notwithstanding the wisdom of these enactments, they did not prove a sufficient remedy for evils so deeply rooted, and which were not a little invigorated by the continued exactions of the king and the pope.

Munster was still desolated by fierce contentions between the families of De Clare and O'Brien, while the house of O'Connor continued to present a feeble resistance to the encroachments of De Burgo.

CHAPTER XIII.

Accession of Edward II.—Piers Gaveston, Chief Governor—Great Power and Ambition of the Earl of Ulster—Lord Edmund Butler, Chief Governor—Invasion of Edward Bruce—Joint Expedition of the Earl of Ulster, and Fedhlim O'Connor—Battle of Colerain—Defection of Fedhlim—Edward Bruce crowned King of Ireland—Arrival of the King of Scotland—Anecdote of Robert Bruce—Progress of Edward Bruce in Munster—Battle of Athenry—Roger Mortimer, Chief Governor—Battle of Dundalk—Defeat and Death of Bruce.

At the accession of Edward II. in 1307, a new era of misery opened on this unhappy country. Sir John Wogan was removed from the government to make way for Piers Gaves-

ton, the well-known minion of this weak monarch, who, proscribed by the English nobility, was sent into dignified exile as vicegerent of Ireland. The personal qualities of Gaveston procured him a temporary popularity in this country. His princely port, splendid retinue, and fascinating manners, excited general admiration; and having soon taken the field, he displayed a degree of courage and enterprise which gave omen of a vigorous administration. The turbulent septs of Leinster were driven from their retreats, and their chieftain O'Dempsey, was slain in battle. Gaveston then marching into Thomond, subdued O'Brien, and having now no enemy to encounter, he proceeded to adopt measures for the protection of the English settlements. But the magnificence of his court soon excited the jealousy of the great English lords, particularly of Richard De Burgo, earl of Ulster, who then kept his court at Trim, with all the state of a sovereign prince. These jealousies were on the point of breaking into open hostilities, when Gaveston was recalled,

and Sir John Wogan entrusted once more with the viceroyalty of Ireland.

The power of the earl of Ulster, had now attained so great a height, that he despised the authority of a government without strength to curb his violence. The imbecile Edward sought to gain his confidence, by appointing him his plenipotentiary to treat with Robert Bruce, the king of Scotland, whose deputies attended him in Ireland. Intoxicated by this flattery, he soon spurned all restraint; and in 1311, he entered Thomond with all the pride of an independent sovereign, to espouse the cause of Donogh O'Brien, against Dermod, his competitor. But being signally defeated and taken prisoner by Sir Robert De Clare and the Geraldines, he was compelled to submit to terms of peace dictated by his conquerors, and give two of his daughters in marriage to Thomas and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, who afterwards became earls of Kildare and Desmond.

In the year 1315, the scourge of foreign invasion was added to the other calamities under which the country was suffering. The victory

of Robert Bruce at Bannockburn which secured to him the possession of the crown of Scotland, excited in the Irish chieftains an ardent desire to emulate his example, and shake off the yoke of a feeble government. Those of Ulster opened a correspondence with the Scottish king, and representing in the most pathetic terms, the distresses of their country, entreated his assistance for an unhappy people, the kinsmen and brethren of the Scots, from whom they expressed their willingness to receive a sovereign whose valour might rescue them from the slavery they endured. Robert Bruce gladly embraced the proposal of the Irish as a favorable opportunity of providing employment for his brother Edward, whose ambition he dreaded, as, having bravely fought by his side through all his wars, he now claimed a participation in the royal dignity,

The young Scottish prince was so impatient to commence his enterprize, that in the year 1314, he made a precipitate attempt on the Northern coast of Ireland with an insignificant force, which was soon repulsed by the vigorous

measures adopted by lord Edmond Butler, the chief governor. However, he proved more successful in the following year; for on the 25th of May, he landed at Larne, in the county of Antrim, with six thousand hardy Scots, commanded by Randolph, earl of Murray, Sirs Philip Mowbray, John Stewart, Colin Campbell, John Ramsey, John Monteith, and other distinguished leaders. Bruce, soon after his landing, detached a part of his army to lay siege to Carrickfergus, which contained an English garrison under lord Thomas Mandeville; and in the attack and defence of the place, great bravery was displayed on both sides. Upon one occasion, Neil Fleming, a Scottish leader, nobly sacrificed himself and his party to preserve the besiegers from the destructive effects of a sally from the fortress. Placing himself at the head of his troop, he boldly advanced to meet the assailants, while he despatched a messenger to prince Edward, and his first desperate onset checked the progress of the English. Mandeville, the governor, now marched in person to their relief;

but while attempting to surround the Scots, whose brave commander had fallen mortally wounded, Bruce came up with his guards; and Gilbert Harper, a man renowned for his strength and valour, distinguishing Mandeville by the richness of his armour, rushed forward and felled him to the ground with his battle-axe, in which situation he was despatched by the prince of Scotland. The English, dispirited by the loss of their commander, now fled to the castle, leaving their wounded comrades to the mercy of their ruthless enemies; but they gallantly maintained their post for several months.

Encouraged by this success, Bruce now advanced into the country. Many of the Ulster lords flocked to his standard, bound themselves by the most solemn engagements, and marched with their followers under his command, to wreak their vengeance on those whom they considered the common enemy. The whole of that district soon became a terrible scene of carnage. Armagh, Newry, Dundalk, and other places, were captured and

pillaged; and the English settlers were every where massacred, their castles levelled to the ground, their towns set on fire, and the news was received with exultation by all the enemies of the English government throughout the island.

The want of union which hitherto prevailed amongst the great lords, had greatly facilitated the progress of the invaders. At length the earl of Ulster, commanding his vassals to attend him at Roscommon, marched to Athlone, where he was joined by Fedhlim O'Connor, the Irish prince of Connaught, with a considerable force. From thence he advanced to the Northern province, being joined on his route by a reinforcement of Leinster troops, under Butler, the lord deputy. But the proud earl rejected the assistance of the king's vicegerent, saying, that his own troops were sufficient to repel the Scots, and Butler returned to his seat of government. De Burgo's success by no means realized his vaunting prediction. Bruce, adopting the advice of his chief associate, O'Neill of Tyrone, retreated farther

into Ulster, whither he was pursued by the earl, who, for a considerable time, was unable to bring his adversary to action, while both armies suffered dreadfully for want of provisions. A general battle was fought, at length, near Colerain, in which Bruce proved victorious; and he immediately commenced a secret negociation with Fedhlim, the young prince of Connaught, to detach him from what he termed his dishonourable alliance with the earl of Ulster, assuring him, that if he deserted the English interest, he would be re-instated in his sovereignty in as ample a manner as any of his most distinguished predecessors.

Fedhlim, a youth in his twenty-second year, of a martial genius, high spirited, and inexperienced, listened with eagerness to these overtures. He found a plausible pretext for detaching himself from the earl, in the state of his own province, where Roderick, one of his kinsmen, had taken advantage of his absence to collect some forces, in order to supplant him; and had even made offers to Bruce of expelling the English from Connaught, if he

would acknowledge him as the rightful sovereign. The Scottish prince readily received him as his ally: he at the same time, recommended to him, to suspend the discussion of his claims to the sovereignty, till the common enemy had been subdued, and a general peace restored. But Roderick, uninfluenced by this moderate counsel, continued to harass the partisans of his rival, by burning their towns, till he compelled them to acknowledge his sovereignty. Fedhlim, to check the farther progress of the usurper, marched homeward with his principal troops; and the earl of Ulster, being thus left unsupported, was compelled to retire before the united army of Scots and Northern Irish. Want of provisions, however, prevented Bruce from pursuing his advantage, and he remained a considerable time in Ulster unmolested, holding courts of judicature, and affecting all the state and dignity of a sovereign.

Fedhlim, on his arrival in Connaught, found his army too much weakened to make any serious impression on the usurper, till he was

joined by a select body of English forces, under the command of Sir John Bermingham, a distinguished general. He now brought his antagonist to an engagement, when the defeat and death of Roderick re-instated him in all his former dignities and possessions. But this signal service was not sufficient to divest his mind of a deep-rooted antipathy to the English government. The first use he made of his re-establishment, was to declare openly for Bruce, and draw his sword against his late auxiliaries. Making a rapid inroad into Munster, he slew Miles de Cogan, lord Stephen of Exeter, and many of the English settlers. His example was speedily followed by the prince of Thomond and other chieftains of Munster and Meath, as well as by some degenerate English, (as they were called,) among whom were the Lacys, with their numerous followers. The clergy throughout the island, fanned the rising flame of insurrection, by extolling the Scottish prince as the deliverer of their country, and exhorting the laity to take up arms against the enemies of the church and nation.

To invigorate the exertions of his friends, Edward Bruce now took the title of king of Ireland, and was solemnly crowned at Dundalk. His brother, king Robert, arrived soon after from Scotland, with a powerful reinforcement, and the town of Carrickfergus was compelled to surrender after a brave resistance. The affairs of his country did not permit Robert Bruce to remain long enough in Ireland to add many laurels to those he had already so gloriously won. Yet a story is related of him during his short residence in our island, which reflects more honor on his memory, than the most brilliant victory would have done. While a division of the Scottish army was preparing to retire before a greatly superior force of their antagonists, king Robert heard the shriek of a woman. Inquiring from whence it proceeded, he was informed by his attendants, that a poor woman had just given birth to an infant; being consequently unable to accompany the army, she was about to be left behind, and she had shrieked from terror at the prospect of falling with her infant into the hands

of a barbarous enemy. Distracted for a moment by the opposing feelings of humanity for the poor woman's distress, and of fear for the safety of his army, Bruce's eyes at length kindled like fire, and he exclaimed, "Ah, gentlemen, never let it be said, that a man who was born of a woman, and nursed by a woman's tenderness, should leave a mother and her infant to the mercy of barbarians. In the name of God let the odds and the risk be what they will, I will fight Edmond Butler, rather than leave these poor creatures behind me;" and he instantly ordered his army to form in line of battle. The English general, however, conceiving from this boldness, that Bruce must have received a reinforcement, did not think proper to attack him; the king of Scotland accomplished his humane object of saving the poor woman and her child, and then his army retreated at leisure without suffering any inconvenience from the halt.*

* This trait in the character of Robert Bruce, has been copied from Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather."

The reinforcement which he had received from Scotland, and the junction of a great number of Irish and English malcontents encouraged Edward Bruce to march southward with an army, rendered ferocious by their sufferings from want of provisions, and resolved to take the most deadly vengeance of their enemies. The great English lords, now roused from their apathy by the approach of a formidable invasion both from Ulster and Connaught, adopted the most vigorous measures to check the torrent which threatened to overwhelm them, and they entered into an association to support the interest of the king of England with their lives and fortunes. To encourage this rising spirit of loyalty, John lord Offaley, was created earl of Kildare, and lord Edmund Butler, was made earl of Carrick. The earl of Kildare, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald of Desmond, were eminently conspicuous in their exertions upon this occasion; and, while they, with the earl of Carrick, undertook the protection of Leinster and Munster, William De Burgo and Richard De Berming-

ham, marched into Connaught to attack Fedhlim O'Connor. This warlike young chieftain soon collected his forces, and met the invaders near the town of Athenry, in the county of Galway. One of the most bloody engagements recorded in Irish history ensued. Fedhlim, with eight thousand of his followers fell on the field of battle, and with him perished the last hope of the royal house of O'Connor. The walls of Athenry are said to have been built from the spoils of this terrible engagement.

After the battle, Sir Richard de Bermingham, ordered one of his squires, or rather attendants, John Hussey, to examine the dead bodies, in order to discover whether O'Kelly, his mortal foe, were among the slain. Hussey proceeded to execute his commission, attended by one man, which was soon perceived by O'Kelly, who, lurking about the field, exclaimed, "Hussey, thou seest I am at all points armed, and have my esquire, a manly man, while thou art thin, and thy page a youngling, so that if I loved thee not for thine own sake, I might betray thee for thy master's. But come

and serve me, and I promise thee by St. Patrick's staff, to make thee a lord in Connaught, of more ground than thy master hath in Ireland." Hussey's attendant soliciting him to accept this proposal, was instantly slain by his master, who then slew O'Kelly, and compelled his squire to bear his head on a truncheon, into Athenry, where it was presented to Sir Richard Bermingham, who instantly dubbed Hussey a knight, and his family became afterwards barons of Galtrim.

In the mean time, Edward Bruce advanced to the walls of Dublin, and encamped near Castleknock, where he took prisoners, lord Hugh Tyrrell and his wife. His soldiers pillaged St. Patrick's church, and St. Mary's abbey; but the citizens under the direction of Butler, the chief governor, to retard his approach, set fire to Thomas-street, by which St. John's church without Newgate, Magdalen chapel, and all the western suburbs were consumed. This determined resolution of the inhabitants of Dublin, caused Bruce to retire;

and proceeding to Leixlip, he burned that town, and then marched under the guidance of the Lacys, to Naas, which he pillaged, his soldiers opening the very tombs in the church-yard in search of treasure. Near Athy, he was encountered by Sir Hamon Grace, a descendant of the celebrated Raymond le Gross, who by his vigilance and activity, had greatly contributed to frustrate the design of the Scottish prince on the capital. This brave commander now assailed him at a place called Ascul, with a force scarcely exceeding a fourth of that of his opponent, and he maintained the conflict with unabated ardour, till he fell, with lord John Bonneville and Sir William Prendergast, on the field mortally wounded: his followers then fled on all sides. Bruce now continued his destructive career through Kildare and Ossory into Munster, marking his progress with bloodshed and desolation; and the lands of the earl of Carrick, in the neighbourhood of Nenagh, became the particular theatre of his barbarous violence. He entered Limerick on the 21st of

September, and there held his court till the following Easter, surrounded by many of the chieftains of Munster and Connaught.

During this interval, a parliament assembled at Kilkenny to adopt measures for the defence of the realm; and the Butlers, Geraldines, and Powers, raised an army of thirty thousand men; while in Easter-week, 1317, Roger Mortimer, (now appointed lord justice,) landed at Youghal, with a large reinforcement from England. Alarmed at these hostile preparations, Bruce led his army back to Ulster, which he reached unmolested, as the English were unable to pursue him through a desolated country.

On his arrival in Dublin, Mortimer liberated the earl of Ulster, who had been imprisoned by the citizens, on account of his inglorious conduct in the North, which they attributed to his sister being married to the king of Scotland. John Lacy was condemned, and died in prison, while Hugh was hanged at Drogheda. He then marched into Meath, from whence he chased the other Lacys into Connaught; and by wise and vigorous measures, he soon re-es-

tablished the English interest in Leinster. In this he was greatly assisted by the fulmination of the papal thunders which were now levelled, not only against Bruce and his military associates, but against the Irish clergy, who had so zealously excited their countrymen to insurrection.

Bruce's army were, in the mean time, perishing by hundreds, the victims of famine and disease; and to such extremity were they driven, that in many instances the survivors are said to have subsisted on the dead bodies of their comrades. In the beginning of 1318, Mortimer returned to England, leaving the government in the hands of Bicknor and Fitz-John, the archbishops of Dublin and Cashel, who, after tranquillizing Munster, despatched Sir John Bermingham with several distinguished officers, and fifteen hundred chosen men into Ulster, to subdue the remnant of the Scots. These were speedily to be followed by a vast force from every province in the kingdom under English or Irish leaders, who were now all equally anxious to rid the country of a scourge

by which it had been so long afflicted. Bruce, after all his losses had still three thousand men, though they were extremely weakened by their long continued privations and sufferings. His brother, king Robert, was also on the point of coming to his assistance; but such was the romantic valour of Edward Bruce, that he resolved to meet the English in their advance, and decide the contest by his own unassisted prowess. At length the two armies met at the hill of Faughard, near Dundalk, under leaders on both sides of the most distinguished skill and bravery. In the army of Bruce served lord Philip De Mowbray, lord Walter Soulis, lord Allan Stewart with his three brethren, Sir Robert and Sir Aumar De Lacy, John Kermerdyne, and Walter White. On the English side, Sir John, Sir Edward, and Sir William Bermingham, Sir Richard Tuite, Sir Miles Verdon, Sir Hugh Tripton, Sir Herbert Sutton, and Sir John Cusack, with Roland de Jorse, primate of Armagh, who was a warm partisan of the English interest: they were also joined by some choice soldiers from

Drogheda, under the command of Sir Walter Lapulk and Sir John Maupas.

Before the battle commenced, the primate went through the English ranks, exhorted the soldiers to fight valorously against the enemies of their nation, and pronounced absolution on all who should fall in so just and honourable a cause. Encouraged by the prelate's benediction, the troops rushed with eagerness to the fight; and for a long time the battle was contested with equal bravery on both sides. While the victory was yet undecided, Sir John Maupas singled out the prince of Scotland. They fought hand to hand with desperate valour, till the gallant Bruce fell before his antagonist, and Sir John Maupas, pierced with mortal wounds, sank a victor in death, on the body of his prostrate enemy. With Bruce fell the brave Sirs Philip Mowbray, Walter de Soulis, and Allan Stewart. On the death of their leader, the enfeebled Northerns fled, after sustaining a loss of two thousand men. King Robert arrived only to hear the sad tidings of the death of his brother, and

the destruction of his army; and Sir John Bermingham having expelled O'Neill from his territory of Tyrone, marched his victorious troops back to Dublin, where he was now rewarded with the earldom of Louth. It is supposed, that a piece of cannon was used by the English at this battle, as about ninety years back a great gun bound with iron hoops was dug up near Dundalk church. Many coins of Robert Bruce have been found in the same neighbourhood, which, it is supposed, were thrown away by the fugitive Scots in their flight.

Thus terminated the rash invasion of Edward Bruce, not less disastrously to himself than to the people whose deliverance was his professed object. For many subsequent years the Irish nation felt the fatal effects of the massacres and devastations committed on both sides during this sanguinary struggle, and particularly the restoration of the long exploded custom of exacting provisions and money for soldiers from the wretched people without any satisfaction. This barbarous practice (which was termed *coyne* and *livery*,) was

re-introduced by Maurice Fitz-Gerald of Desmond, who also compelled the English settlers in Cork, Waterford, Limerick, and Kerry, to abandon their possessions, taking what he pleased for his mixed rabble of Irish and degenerate English of the worst description. By these means he speedily raised his fortune from £1000 to £10,000 annually, (a sum equal to more than £150,000 of our present money:) and renouncing his allegiance to the English government, he assumed the authority of an Irish chieftain, and ruled his followers with a barbarous magnificence. His example was followed by other English lords, and before the tragical termination of the reign of Edward II. the people in many parts of Munster and Leinster were driven by their oppressive violence into open revolt. About this period O'Brien of Thomond slew Sir Richard De Clare and eighty of his followers.

CHAPTER XIV.

Edward III.—The Bishop of Ossory and Lady Alice Kettle—Maurice of Desmond and Lord John de la Poer—Insurrection of the Irish—The Palatinates—Sir Anthony Lucy—Seizure of Desmond—Murder of the young Earl of Ulster—Severe Ordinances of King Edward—Contentions among the English Settlers—Vigorous Administration of Sir Ralph Ufford—Lionel Duke of Clarence, Chief Governor—Perilous Campaign in Munster—Statute of Kilkenny—Battle of Manister Nenagh.

In the year 1327 Edward III. ascended the throne of England, when he had scarcely attained his fifteenth year. Both countries were at that period in a state of violent confusion, owing to the turbulence of the great

lords; and this will not appear wonderful when we consider the state of society that then existed. The baron left his estate to the management of his bailiff, while all his tenants or villains, as they were called, were at his absolute disposal. The produce of his lands was consumed in rustic hospitality, and he maintained a host of idle retainers, who were always ready to execute any mischief or disorder at his command. In fact each nobleman was a kind of independent sovereign who exercised the power of life and death within his own territories, and often encouraged his retainers to the commission of the most horrible crimes, while these lords sometimes confederated together in mutual support of their iniquity. The most barbarous ignorance and superstition prevailed at the same time, a remarkable instance of which occurred in Ireland in the beginning of the reign of this monarch.

Richard Ledred, bishop of Ossory, a man of a proud and vindictive character, brought a charge of witchcraft against the lady Alice Kettle of Kilkenny, and her son William,

with two of her dependents; and the following were some of the grave charges preferred against her, viz.—that she held conferences with a spirit named Robin Artisson, to whom she sacrificed in the highway the eyes of nine red cocks and nine peacocks—that in her closet was found a sacramental wafer with the devil's name stamped upon it, with a pipe of ointment to grease a staff on which she was in the habit of riding through the air—and that in the night she raked all the filth towards the door of her son, muttering these words:—

To the house of William my son,
Hie all the wealth of Kilkenny town.

On these charges Petronilla, her maid, was convicted and burned. Lady Alice herself was acquitted, but a new charge of heresy being preferred against her, she underwent a similar fate. Her son was kept in confinement for nine weeks, but was liberated by the favor of Arnold le Poer, one of the magistrates of Kilkenny. Le Poer himself was now charged with heresy; but being protected by the prior of Kilmainham, who was then chief governor,

the enraged and insolent bishop extended his accusation even to the lord justice, who finding it difficult to secure himself, was forced to leave Le Poer to expire in prison.

This affair soon engaged the attention of the whole island, and the king's writ was issued for summoning a parliament to examine into the proceedings; who declared in favour of the Lord Justice. At the same time Bicknor, the archbishop of Dublin, retorted the charge of heresy on the original author of all this trouble; but Ledred flying from the country, appealed to the pope, and was not restored to his bishopric till twenty-five years after.

Another insignificant circumstance which occurred this year produced circumstances of a still more sanguinary nature. Lord John de la Poer had jestingly or contemptuously called Maurice of Desmond, the *rhymer* or *poet*, an offence which was not to be expiated but by a bloody war. Aided by his associates, Butler and Bermingham, Maurice took the field against de la Poer and his confederate de Burgo, and in spite of the remonstrances of Kildare, the

lord justice, he continued his ravages until he drove de la Poer from the kingdom. King Edward now issued his mandate to compel these turbulent chieftains to lay down their arms, and a formal reconciliation took place between the contending parties. The temporary tranquillity that ensued encouraged the Irish once more to seek admission to the privileges of English subjects; but their wishes were, as usual, defeated by the intrigues of the enemies to the welfare of the two countries. Incensed at the neglect with which their just remonstrances were treated, they again flew to arms, and having chosen O'Brien of Thomond to be their leader, they burned the town of Tipperary, slew lord Thomas Butler and many of his followers near Mullingar, while the earl of Louth with eight of his family and two hundred soldiers, met a similar fate at Balbriggan. An act of barbarous rage is recorded to have occurred during this insurrection, which must stamp it with infamy, however justly provoked. In the course of their progress the insurgents surrounded a church, in which about

eighty persons were assembled at their devotions. Despairing of escape the unhappy people requested only that the priest might be suffered to depart without injury. But this determined the merciless ruffians to make him the first object of their vengeance; and when he ventured out, holding forth the Host as a protection, they tore it from him, trampled it under foot, then plunged their weapons into his body, and afterwards destroyed the church and all who were cooped up in it by fire.

Wexford was gallantly defended by James Butler, who was lately created earl of Ormond; and Darcy, the lord justice, made some progress in subduing the disaffected of Leinster: but the insurrection in Munster had become so extensive, that he found his force too weak to suppress it without the aid of Maurice of Desmond, now become the most influential lord in Ireland. The chief governor treated with him as an independent sovereign; and so great was his power, that among his own retainers he was able to raise an army of ten thousand men. To bind him more closely to

the English interests, king Edward created him earl of Desmond, and granted him royal, or as they were called, palatinate liberties in the county of Kerry. Similar privileges were, at the same time, conferred on the earl of Ormond; and thus nine palatinates were created in Ireland, viz.—Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny, Kildare, and Leix (afterwards the Queen's County) Meath, Ulster, Ormond, and Desmond. The lords of these territories were permitted to exercise all the authority of independent sovereigns within their respective districts, and were thus rendered nearly independent of the English crown. Had the chivalrous king Edward devoted to the tranquillization of Ireland half the care and expense which his French expeditions cost him, he might have rendered this island a faithful and valuable auxiliary to England, and saved that vast expenditure of blood and treasure, which, in subsequent reigns was found necessary to reduce the exorbitant power of the Anglo-Irish nobles, who had been thus unwisely exalted to the rank of sovereign princes.

Notwithstanding the great favors conferred upon the earl of Desmond, his army performed little valuable service. The Munster Irish under O'Brien lay encamped at Cashel, and repelled every attempt of their adversaries; while violent disputes broke out between the earls of Ulster and Desmond, respecting some depredations committed by Sir Walter de Burgo on the lands of the Geraldines. Confusion and disorder prevailed at this time in all quarters, to suppress which, Sir Anthony Lucy, a valiant English knight, was sent over as chief governor in 1331. His first step was to assemble a parliament at Kilkenny, to which all the great lords were summoned ; but his mandate was treated with contempt. This confirming a suspicion which the viceroy entertained, that the commotions which prevailed were secretly countenanced by those turbulent chieftains, he resolved to strike at the root of the evil by seizing their persons. After defeating the Irish insurgents at Thurles, he seized Sir William and Walter de Bermingham at Clonmel, and sent them prisoners to Dublin, where

the former was hanged in the following year. The earl of Desmond, Walter de Burgo, and many of their followers, were committed to the custody of the marshal of Limerick, from whence Desmond made his escape ; but being re-taken soon after, he was imprisoned for eighteen months ; and having at length given great security for his future good conduct, he repaired to England, and was again received to favour by King Edward. In the mean time his attendants who continued confined in the castle of Limerick, formed a conspiracy, slew the constable, and seized the castle ; but the citizens, headed by Bamberry, the mayor, acted with such vigour and bravery, that they recovered the castle, and put all the prisoners to the sword.

Had these vigorous measures for breaking the power of the turbulent leaders been followed up, lasting tranquillity might have been established in this unhappy country ; but young Edward having now attained his majority, was more anxious to gain blood-stained laurels in the wars of Scotland and France, than to pur-

chase true glory by restoring peace and security to this distracted portion of his dominions. Strong measures against the insurgents were once more laid aside, and the old inglorious system of treating with the adversaries of government, was again resorted to, by which the disaffected were made acquainted with the weakness of the administration, and their own real power. This was rendered manifest by the consequences which followed the death of William, the young earl of Ulster, who, in 1333, was basely assassinated near Carrickfergus by his own servants. The countess with her infant daughter, fled to England in the greatest consternation, leaving the vast possessions of that great family without protection. The law which vested the earl's lands in the hands of the king during the minority of the infant was disregarded by O'Neill, who seizing this opportunity of recovering his ancient power, instantly rose in arms, passed the river Bann, and drove the English settlers planted by De Burgo, from nearly all their possessions, which he parcelled out among his followers.

In Connaught, Sir William and Sir Edmund de Burgo, junior branches of the Ulster family, seized the earl's lands in that province, and divided his great seigniory between them: but conscious that the law of England would not sanction this usurpation, they renounced their English names, language, manners, and apparel, and adopted those of the Irish, the one calling himself *Mac William Eighter*, and the other *Mac William Oughter;* that is, *the Further* and the *Nether Mac William.*

The alternate systems of weakness and vigour which had been hitherto pursued, having failed to pacify the country, or produce the expected revenue for carrying on his foreign wars, King Edward, in 1341, resorted to a measure which gave just alarm to all the descendants of the first English settlers. By an ordinance passed under the great seal, all remissions of debts due to the crown were declared null and void; all grants made by the king or his father were resumed; and all persons were ordered to be removed from office who had not possessions in England. Desmond,

who since his reconciliation with the government, had given many signal instances of his loyalty, resolved to give this unjust and impolitic proceeding the most vigorous opposition. In this resolution he was supported by his kinsman, Maurice earl of Kildare, with many of the nobility, as well as the cities and corporate towns of the south; and when Sir John Morris, the chief governor, summoned them to attend a parliament in Dublin, the Geraldines, instead of obeying, convened another assembly more numerous and respectable at Kilkenny, who, styling themselves the prelates, nobles, and commons of the land, sent a petition of grievances to the king, which was graciously received, and produced a considerable modification of the obnoxious ordinances.

From this period faction appears to have prevailed with great violence among the descendants of the old English adventurers and the new settlers, or as they were called the *English by blood* and the *English by birth.* The Irish took frequent advantage of these dissensions to harass both parties, and thus fresh disorders

were engendered. They had risen to such a height in 1343, that the government resolved on adopting the most vigorous measures for their suppression, and for this purpose the king conferred the office of chief governor on Sir Ralph Ufford, a man equally indignant against the Irish insurgents and the discontented English; and who during his administration is said to have wielded a two-edged sword. After adopting the most prudential measures for checking the depredations of the Irish, he resolved to turn his attention towards the English malcontents, of whom Desmond was considered the head. As a test of his obedience he summoned him to attend a parliament at Dublin; but the earl, as upon a former occasion, affected to despise the mandate of the viceroy, and called an assembly of his own at Callan. Ufford, who was not be intimidated like his predecessor, immediately issued a royal proclamation, forbidding the nobles and commons at their peril, to attend this illegal convention, and to enforce his menace, he marched into Munster at the head of a considerable force,

took possession of Desmond's lands, executed several of his principal partisans, and so terrified this refractory lord, that he compelled him to give securities to abide a fair and honorable trial. The earl of Kildare was soon after seized and imprisoned, and it is likely that the vigorous conduct of this chief governor would have quelled in a great measure the turbulence of faction, had he had not been suddenly cut off by the hand of death. The succeeding administration proved more lenient to the faults of the Geraldines. Kildare was released from prison, and Desmond was allowed to repair to the English court, and plead his own cause, and in 1352, he got the restoration of all his possessions and privileges. He soon after with the earl of Kildare attended king Edward into France; and Kildare was so distinguished by his gallant conduct at the siege of Calais, that he received the honor of knighthood from the king's hand.

The earl of Desmond, who for nearly forty years had embarrassed the government by his ambitious and turbulent conduct, was now so

completely restored to the royal favour, that king Edward appointed him lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1355; but he filled his high dignity a very short time, being removed by the stroke of death in the following year. Three of his sons, Maurice, John, and Gerald, successively inherited his title, and vast possessions. The two first enjoyed them but a few years, when they fell to Gerald, commonly called the poet, who is recorded to have made such extraordinary proficiency in mathematics and other branches of learning, as to be esteemed a magician in those rude and ignorant times.

Sir Thomas Rokeby, who succeeded Desmond in 1356, evinced great zeal in the reformation of the prevailing abuses, and punishing those dissensions which continually prevailed between the old and new English settlers. He also adopted some measures for promoting the instruction of the people; and such was the integrity of his private life, that when one of his friends expressed surprise that the lord justice should suffer himself to be served in wooden cups, he is said to have answered,

'These homely cups and dishes pay truly for what they contain. I had rather drink out of wood and pay gold and silver, than drink out of gold and make wooden payment.' But the evils of the country were too deeply rooted, as well as too complicated to be remedied by the well-intended efforts of this excellent chief governor. Disunited among themselves, the English settlers were continually harassed by the irruptions of the natives, while the latter were such objects of the jealousy of the government, that to cut off, as much as possible, all intercourse with them, it was ordained that no *mere Irishman*, that is, such as had not been admitted to the rights of an English citizen, should be permitted to enjoy any office of trust, civil or ecclesiastical. This proved a fresh cause of irritation to the Irish; and O'Neill in the North, and O'Brien in the South, so encouraged and assisted the insurrections of the other chieftains, that the country was kept in a perpetual state of civil war.

The English monarch having brought his long protracted contest with France, to a glo-

rious and successful termination, now resolved on vigorous measures for suppressing those disorders in Ireland, which threatened the complete subversion of his authority in the island. His first step was to constitute Lionel duke of Clarence, his second son, vicegerent, with extraordinary powers; with such a military force as might enable him to attempt the pacification of the country with vigour. The duke of Clarence had also a personal interest in settling the disorders of Ireland, as he was married to the young heiress of the late earl of Ulster, whose vast domains in Tyrone and Connaught, had again fallen into the hands of their ancient possessors. To raise troops for this important expedition, king Edward issued his writs to all the English nobles who held lands in this country to repair to the service of prince Lionel; but not more than fifteen hundred men could be collected, who embarked under the command of the earls of Stafford and Ormond, Sir John Carew, and Sir William Windsore.

The duke of Clarence arrived in Ireland in 1361, and his first proceedings were ill-calcu-

lated to augment the puny force which he had brought with him to tranquillize the country. Taught to consider the old English settlers as wholly unworthy of confidence, he forbade them to approach his camp, and was thus left without advice or direction among a strange people, of whose manners, language, and mode of making war, he was totally ignorant. The security of Leinster against the insurgents of the South being his first object, he precipitately marched into Thomond without guidance or intelligence; but here his troops were extremely harassed by the vigilance and activity of O'Brien, who continually hovered about his camp, and retarded the progress of the English by his desultory attacks. In this way many of his soldiers were cut off, while numbers deserted to the enemy; and the duke was at length placed in such perilous circumstances, that he was forced to call the old English to his standard. By this means and the arrival of some further reinforcements from England, his army was so increased, as to enable him to gain some considerable advantages over the insurgents,

and compelled O'Brien for the present to lay down his arms.

He now returned in triumph to the capital, where he conferred the honor of knighthood on several of his followers, and was rewarded for his success against the insurgents in the South by large contributions, both from the clergy and laity. In 1364, he returned to England, leaving the country still a prey to the dissensions of the new and the old English. These rose at length to such a height, as to demand the interposition of the royal authority, and all contention on the subject was forbidden under the penalty of two years imprisonment. But this plan proving insufficient to remedy the evil, Clarence resumed the Irish government in 1367, and, taught by experience, he perceived that the first step necessary to the restoration of tranquillity, was the reformation of the English settlers. With this object he summoned a parliament to meet at Kilkenny, which was numerously attended, and the result of its deliberations, was the famous act, known by the name of the Statute of Kilkenny. By

this ordinance it was decreed, that any man of English race contracting marriage, fostering, or gossipred, (customs held more sacred than the ties of blood) with the new Irish, should be punished as a traitor—that any Englishman using any Irish name, apparel, or custom, should forfeit his lands and tenements; and it was also made penal for the English to permit the Irish to graze their lands, or to entertain their bards, or story-tellers. These enactments for restraining all social intercourse between the two races, appear to have originated in the opinion indulged by the government, that if united, they would set the rule of England at defiance—a supposition, probably, not ill-founded. The only item favorable to the Irish, contained in this celebrated statute, was, that the English were forbidden to levy war upon them without a special warrant from the state. In other respects, they appear to have been considered an irreclaimable race: yet no efforts were used to reform those practices amongst them which were prohibited to the English, or lead them to exchange their own

petty factions and tyrannies, for an honorable submission to the monarch of England.

The Statute of Kilkenny had considerable effect in restraining the turbulence of the great lords during the remainder of the duke of Clarence's administration; but on his departure it broke out afresh, and his successor, the earl of Desmond, was unable to keep their violence within due bounds. In 1369, Sir William Windsore was appointed lord deputy. He had scarcely entered upon the exercise of his authority, when he was called on to march against O'Brien and O'Connor, who had defeated the earl of Desmond near Manister-Nenagh in the county of Limerick, and taken him prisoner, with lord Kerry, and several other persons of distinction. On the approach of the king's deputy, the Irish retired to their inaccessible haunts, and he was compelled to return, without performing any effectual service. Indeed, during the remainder of king Edward's reign, the authority of the English government was so weakened, that the lord deputy could only maintain the peace of the

country by pensioning O'Brien and others of the Irish chieftains, by whom the English settlers, in many districts, were held in a kind of vassalage.

CHAPTER XV.

Richard II.—Robert De Vere, Duke of Ireland—King Richard's Expedition to Ireland—Submission of the Irish Chieftains—Royal Festivities in Dublin—Fresh Insurrections—Death of the Earl of March—Richard's Second Expedition—Art Mac Murchard—Deposition and Death of Richard II.

The death of Edward III. took place in the year 1377; his successor, Richard II. son of the renowned Black Prince, being then a minor in his eleventh year. During the nonage of the young king, little change occurred in the aspect of Irish affairs, except some formidable descents on the coast by the French and Spaniards, which at length called forth the English navy to oppose them, and a furious

engagement took place in the harbour of Kinsale, in which the invaders lost several of their ships, the Irish inhabitants contributing much to the victory. Soon after the death of king Edward, Edmond Mortimer, earl of March and Ulster, son to Lionel, duke of Clarence, was appointed vicegerent; and during his administration, a tax of two thirds of their income was laid upon absentees, who were then loudly complained of, as well as in our own days, for abandoning their Irish lands, and impoverishing the country, by spending their revenues in a distant kingdom—thus leaving the residents unequal to the charge and labour of supporting the public burdens. A royal mint was about this time established in Dublin, and liberty granted to the king's Irish subjects to dig for mines, and to carry on a free trade with Portugal.

The earl of March dying at Cork in 1381, the viceroyalty was conferred on his young son Roger, under the guardianship of his uncle, Thomas Mortimer; but the administration of a minor in Ireland, was found to be attended

with the same inconveniencies as a minor reign in England; and the young deputy was quickly recalled to make room for Philip De Courtney, a nobleman allied to the king, who governed the country in so oppressive a manner, that he was not only removed, but arrested on various charges of tyranny and injustice. As Richard approached his majority, the weakness of his understanding, and the violence of his passions became manifest; and when he had attained his full age, produced an extraordinary change in the government of Ireland. Set free from the trammels in which he had been kept during his minority by his uncle, the duke of Gloucester, he now resigned himself wholly to the guidance of Robert De Vere, earl of Oxford, a young nobleman of a gay and insinuating deportment, and whose profligate manners rendered him a willing agent to the king's criminal pleasures. In return, Richard permitted his favorite to repudiate his wife, though she was the king's own relative, and to marry a foreigner, for whom he had conceived an unlawful passion. He loaded him with honours,

and not contented with creating him marquis of Dublin, he raised him to sovereign power, by granting to him and his heirs, the entire dominion of Ireland, as the king of England's liegeman, empowering him to appoint all officers of state and justice, who were to act in his name, and by his authority. The English parliament, anxious that this powerful nobleman should be employed at a distance from the king's person, confirmed this important grant, and consented that five hundred men at arms, and a thousand archers should assist the new sovereign in completing the conquest of Ireland.

The marquis of Dublin marched soon after with great pomp to take possession of his dominions, the king himself accompanying his minion to Wales. But here the violent partiality of the imbecile Richard broke forth afresh; and when the moment of separation arrived, he declared himself unable to support the trial. The favorite accordingly returned to London; where by a new patent, he was created duke of Ireland, with a confirmation of all his former power and privileges, and the govern-

ment of the kingdom was committed to deputies. But this parade of sovereignty proved short-lived. The nobles of England, headed by the princes of the blood, entered into a confederacy to curb the rising power of this unworthy minion, who, after a futile attempt at resistance, was defeated by the earl of Derby, in 1388, and obliged to fly to the Low Countries, while the king was compelled to declare that the marquis of Dublin had forfeited all his grants, and that in future no acts of state in Ireland should be executed under his signet.

The disaffected Irish princes, were not slow in taking advantage of the present weakness of the English government; and we accordingly find that perpetual hostilities raged from North to South. But Sir John Stanley, the chief governor, acted with such vigour, that he ultimately reduced O'Neill, the turbulent chieftain of the North, to submission; and his successor, James, the third earl of Ormond, was equally successful in Louth. This nobleman is said to have possessed such great valour and bodily strength, that he was styled the head of

the chivalry of Ireland. He was equally remarkable for his princely style of living, and his munificence to the church; and was the first of his illustrious family who resided in the castle of Kilkenny, which he purchased from the representatives of the house of Gloucester, by whose ancestor, William earl Marshal, it was built in 1207.

But such was now the disordered state of Ireland that these occasional victories over the insurgents proved but temporary remedies. The revenue of the country fell far short of its expenditure, and the giddy and voluptuous monarch of England was frequently disturbed in the midst of his revelry by the most affecting details of the sufferings of his Irish subjects, and the frightful ravages committed by the lawless bands which devastated the island. The duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, now offered to repair to Ireland, and to use his distinguished abilities for the restoration of tranquillity. The offer was accepted, and some forces were marched to the coast; but at the moment when the duke was about to embark with his train,

he was recalled by the fickle Richard, who declared his intention of making an expedition into Ireland himself, and taking that part of his dominions under his own immediate care. Various reasons have been assigned for this sudden caprice of king Richard. One of these was, that he had been inspired by his flatterers with apprehensions of the danger of entrusting a military force to his uncle, who was so powerful and popular a prince. Another, that having married the princess Anne of Bohemia, he had vainly aspired to the honour of being elected emperor of Germany, whither he had sent ambassadors to negociate on the subject, and was so inflated with hopes of success, that he assumed all the parade of that high dignity. But he was soon informed by his agents that the electors of Germany refused to choose a prince, who was unable to recover his dominions in France—to restrain the insolence of his English subjects; or subdue his enemies in Ireland—and that, stung with this reproach, Richard now resolved to recover his reputation, by making

Ireland the first theatre of his military operations.

The death of queen Anne whom he greatly loved, retarded the king's preparations for some time; but it is said to have finally determined him to proceed on the expedition as a means of diverting the melancholy with which he was oppressed. On the 2d of October, 1394, he landed at Waterford with the greatest military force that had yet reached these shores, consisting of four thousand men at arms and thirty thousand archers, commanded by the duke of Gloucester, the earls of Nottingham and Rutland, lord Thomas Percy, and other distinguished leaders. They had been shipped at Bristol, Holyhead, and Haverford-West, and took near a month coming over.

It was naturally supposed, that this mighty army, led on by the monarch in person, and the prime nobility of England, would quickly subdue the scattered and disunited levies of the old natives, suppress all discontents among the English settlers, and ultimately establish the

authority of government on the firmest basis. The news of its arrival spread dismay among the disaffected chieftains. The insurgents of Leinster retired to their woods and mountains, from whence they occasionally issued forth to attack detached parties of the royal army as it marched towards the capital. Murrough O'Brien of Thomond offered to do homage to the king, pay tribute, and keep the peace inviolate. O'Neill, the chieftain of Ulster, acknowledged himself to be the king's liege-man, imputing the devastations which he had commited to the injustice of the English governors; and Richard, to receive his homage, resolved to proceed to Drogheda, while Mowbray, earl of Nottingham, pitched his camp with 1500 lancers and 2000 archers, near Carlow, to receive the submission and fealty of the Leinster toparchs, who did homage to the commissioners in the most ample form, on bended knees, their heads uncovered, their arms laid aside, and their girdles loosed. To each the lord marshal gave the kiss of peace, after which the chieftains bound themselves by a solemn treaty

to relinquish all the lands which they held in Leinster, and to serve in the king's wars, on condition that they should be paid pensions by the crown, and declared rightful proprietors of all the territories which they should conquer from his majesty's enemies in the other provinces. A similar treaty with the same ceremonies was executed between the king and the Ulster chiefs at Drogheda; and you may form some opinion of the distracted and dismembered state of Ireland at that period, when you are informed, that not less than seventy-five Irish lords thus signified their submission to the English government, all of whom ruled their subjects with a kingly authority, led forth their little armies, were jealous of the least infringement on their rights and dignities, and devotedly attached to their ancient customs and modes of living.

The vain and imbecile Richard, elevated at what he considered the complete reduction of the island, sent to England for the crown-jewels, and with the air of a conqueror proceeded at the head of his new tributaries to

Dublin; where for several months he made a display of that voluptuous magnificence in which he delighted, while his army occupied a tract of about thirty miles around the metropolis. O'Neill, O'Brien, O'Connor, and Mac Murchard, the principal Irish chieftains, were special objects of his favour, and he sought by various arts of condescension, to reconcile them to the manners of the English. The earl of Ormond, who was acquainted with their language, and Henry Castide, an English gentleman, who had been taken prisoner by the Irish some years before, and married a lady of their race, united their entreaties with those of the king; yet it was with difficulty that the chieftains could be brought to compliance. They were lodged in a handsome house, with Henry Castide as their instructor, and master of the ceremonies, he being well acquainted with their language and customs. For some days he indulged them in their usual practice of permitting their minstrels and principal servants to sit beside them, to eat from their plates and drink from their cups, which they justified by saying that every

thing was in common amongst them but their beds. He at length, however, prevailed on them to conform to the English fashion: the kings were placed at an upper table—the minstrels at another below, and the servants at one still lower. He also induced them to exchange their Irish mantles for robes of silk trimmed with squirrel skin, or minnever; and when on horseback, to use saddles and stirrups to which they had hitherto been unaccustomed. When informed that the king intended to confer the honour of knighthood upon them, they expressed their astonishment that he should consider this as any accession to their dignity, as they had received this honour in their earliest years, it being the custom of every Irish king to make his son or nearest kinsman a knight at seven years old. "We assemble," they said, "in a plain. The candidates run with slender lances against a shield erected on a stake; and he who breaks the greatest number, is distinguished by particular honours annexed to his new dignity." King Richard's courtiers acknowledged, that these proofs of early prowess

were highly honourable; but that all the most renowned states of Europe had adopted a more solemn form of conferring the dignity of knighthood: and after describing the ceremonial with minuteness, the chiefs were at length persuaded to submit to its formalities. The installation accordingly took place in the cathedral of Christ Church; and the ceremony was succeeded by a magnificent banquet, at which the four Irish princes, decked in robes of state, were seated at the king's table.

Those English lords, who, by uniting with the Irish insurgents, had incurred the guilt of treason, and in the common parlance of that day, were denominated *Degenerate English*, now sent agents to solicit the king's pardon, on the ground that they had been driven from their allegiance by injustice and oppression, or by the refusal of redress and protection by the Irish government. Unwilling to interrupt his course of luxurious gaiety by measures of severity, Richard the more readily listened to their supplications, granted them a truce for several months; and, elated with the vain hope, that

he had now completely pacified the country, he returned to England, where the church was at this time supposed to be in great danger from the progress of the Lollards—a name applied to the followers of the Reformer, Wickliffe.

King Richard had scarcely taken his departure, when the fallacious nature of the peace he had concluded with the native princes, became apparent. The government of Ireland was entrusted to Roger Mortimer, earl of March, who was speedily sent into Munster to check some hostile movements of O'Brien. From thence he was quickly recalled, by intelligence that a formidable insurrection had broken out in the very neighbourhood of the capital, in consequence of an attempt to enforce the stipulation in the late treaty, by which the Irish of Leinster were bound to evacuate that province. Unwilling to abandon the homes of their fathers, the Irish delayed under various pretexts; and when the requisitions of government became at length peremptory, they flew to arms in every direction; and the English lords were called forth against their several in-

vaders, with such forces as they could collect. The Berminghams and De Burgos gained some advantages over the insurgents of their districts; and the lord lieutenant, accompanied by the earl of Ormond, drove the powerful sept of O'Byrne from their lands in Wicklow. But in the very moment of triumph, while the viceroy was engaged in creating knights and feasting his followers, in honour of his success, intelligence arrived that the O'Tooles, another numerous and turbulent sept, had gained an important victory, and slaughtered a great number of the king's subjects; and that the O'Byrnes, having retreated into Ossory, had there resumed hostilities. The earl of March pursued them with more vigour than prudence; and having fallen into one of those ambuscades, for which the Irish were so famous, was defeated and slain upon the field of battle.

This fatal event furnished king Richard with a pretext for a second expedition to Ireland; and though the death of Gloucester and Arundel, the banishment of the earl of Derby, with his other acts of tyranny, extravagance, and

caprice, had so alienated from him the affections of his English subjects, that the country was menaced with a violent revolution, he resolved at every risk to punish the insolence of the Irish, and avenge the death of his lieutenant. To supply the forces necessary for the expedition, he was compelled to lay fresh burdens on the people, which added new fuel to the discontents that were ready to burst into a flame. Before his departure, he proclaimed a grand tournament at Windsor, at which forty knights and forty squires in green, with the device of a white falcon, were to appear against all comers; but though enlivened by the presence of queen Isabella, a daughter of France, whom Richard had lately espoused, and a brilliant train of ladies and damsels, few of the English nobles honoured the festival with their presence.

When the giddy monarch left his capital for his second expedition to Ireland, the Londoners anticipated for him the fate of Edward II. The duke of York was left regent of England, and his son, the young duke of Aumerle was

ordered to follow the king with a reinforcement. At Bristol, Richard was joined by the son of the late duke of Gloucester, the duke of Exeter, the earl of Salisbury, and the young lord Henry of Lancaster (afterwards the renowned king Henry V.) The earl of Northumberland, and his son, Henry Percy, so well known by the name of Hotspur, declining to attend the king under various pretexts, were proclaimed traitors, and banished the kingdom.

A force of twenty thousand men now embarked at Bristol, in two hundred sail of ships, with which Richard arrived at Waterford, on the 13th of May, 1399, and spent near three weeks in that city and Kilkenny in vain parade, while the insurgents were wasting the whole country on his route to the capital. Encouraged by the inactivity of the English monarch and his mighty host, they declared their resolution to defend their liberty with their last breath, and boasted that the hour was come for their deliverance from foreign usurpation. Roused at length from his indolence by the apprehension of a want of provisions, Richard com-

menced his march against Art Mac Murchard, who, notwithstanding the honours and pensions he received during the royal visit in 1394, was still the inveterate enemy of the English government. On the king's approach, Mac Murchard appeared at the head of three thousand men, well armed and appointed, as if determined to withstand their progress. But no sooner had Richard drawn up his army to meet the attack, than the enemy suddenly disappeared, and the vain-glorious monarch, as if he had gained a signal triumph, ordered the adjacent houses and villages to be set on fire: the royal standard was then advanced, under which he created several knights; and among them, lord Henry of Lancaster. A large body of the peasantry was employed to open a passage through the woods, which the art of Mac Murchard had rendered nearly impassable; so that as the king's army advanced, they continually met impediments in their route, and sometimes found themselves plunged in deep and dangerous morasses. Upon these occasions, the Irish suddenly issued from their retreats with terrific

shouts, and cast their darts with a force which no armour could withstand; and then they as suddenly disappeared. The English forces were thus continually harassed, without the possibility of bringing their ever-watchful foe to a general engagement.

Yet many of the Irish lords were terrified into submission by the great numerical strength of the royal army: and, appearing before the king, with halters round their necks, they fell at his feet, and were again received to favour. To induce Mac Murchard to return to his allegiance, Richard was weak enough to promise him an accession of territory; but the Irish chief, knowing the difficulties to which his army was reduced, gave a haughty answer, in which he set the royal power at defiance. The king had no means of avenging this insult, as his men were perishing by famine, nearly all the horses incapable of service, while a general gloom had spread through the camp; and the bravest knights appeared to sink under sufferings, from which so little honour could be derived. Some relief was at length received by

a few ships from Dublin, laden with provisions, which arrived on the neighbouring coast. No sooner were they descried by the famished soldiers, than they plunged into the sea, seized and rifled the ships, and shed each other's blood in their efforts to obtain some alleviation of their complicated miseries. After this, the royal army, no longer able to keep their ground in a devastated country, proceeded slowly to Dublin, continually harassed by an enemy whom they despised.

The politic Mac Murchard, wisely judging that the difficulties of his opponents would be at an end as soon as they reached the capital, conceived this to be the most favourable moment for attempting an accommodation; and he solicited a safe conduct from the king, that he might repair to his camp, to negociate terms of peace; or otherwise, that some English lords might be deputed to confer with him. Richard chose the latter; and he commissioned the young duke of Gloucester for that purpose. The duke marched to the appointed place, attended by a guard of two hundred lancers, and

a thousand archers; and soon after his arrival, Mac Murchard was seen darting rapidly from a mountain between two woods, near the sea, followed by a numerous train. He was mounted on a stately horse, without a saddle, and appeared formed for agility and strength. At the command of the chieftain, his followers halted at due distance; and then casting his spear from him, he rushed forward to meet the English lord. A parley now took place, in which Mac Murchard was reproached for his grievous infractions of his late solemn engagements, by attacking the king's forces, and killing Mortimer, his vicegerent. He haughtily defended his conduct on various pretences; but, after much debate, he consented to submit; refusing, however, to be bound by any special composition or conditions. This fruitless conference then broke up; and the king was so provoked at Mac Murchard's insolence, that he passionately vowed never to depart from Ireland until he had possessed himself of this arch-rebel, alive or dead: three hundred marks of gold were offered to any who should seize

him, and a strong body of troops was detached to enforce the royal proclamation.

But the sun of Richard's glory was now about to set. On the 28th of June, he made his solemn entry into Dublin, and was sumptuously entertained by the provost and citizens. Aumerle joined him soon after with a reinforcement; and six weeks (during which period tempestuous weather prevented the arrival of any intelligence from England) were spent in thoughtless dissipation. The giddy monarch was at length checked in his career of voluptuous pleasure by the arrival of a bark, which brought intelligence of his total ruin. Since his departure from England, his enemies had been actively engaged in forming a plan for dethroning him; and their conferences ended in an application to Henry, duke of Hereford, to take up arms against a prince who had capriciously banished him from the kingdom, and deprived him of the inheritance which had devolved to him by the death of his father, the duke of Lancaster. Henry willingly accepted the invitation, and landed in England with a

small force, to which thousands of his partisans quickly united themselves. The eyes of all were soon fixed upon him as their deliverer; the clergy favoured his cause; a papal bull declared him the rightful inheritor of the crown; and York, the regent, abandoning his post, submitted to the popular invader. The weak and ill-fated monarch received the fatal information with abject dismay; and though pressed by his friends to return to England without delay, he lingered till his affairs became desperate. With a peevish resentment, he committed lord Henry of Lancaster, and the young duke of Gloucester, to the castle of Trim, and at length sailed for Wales, where he was soon after betrayed into the hands of his rival, by whom he was confined in the tower of London; and his deposition and death speedily followed.

CHAPTER XVI.

Accession of Henry IV.—the Duke of Lancaster, Chief Governor — Insurrections — Loyal Exertions of the Citizens of Dublin— Henry V.—Talbot, Lord Furnival, Chief Governor—Feuds at Waterford—Accession of Henry VI.—Thomas Earl of Desmond dispossessed by his Uncle—Ambition of the Usurper — Feuds between Desmond and Ormond—Rise of the contentions between the Houses of York and Lancaster—Richard Duke of York, Lord Lieutenant— Great Popularity of his Government— O'Connor of Offaley—Wars of the Roses— Thomas Earl of Kildare, Lord Lieutenant— Death of the Duke of York—Accession of Edward IV.—Disordered State of Ireland at this period—Hostilities between the Geraldines and the Butlers—Thomas Earl of

Desmond, Chief Governor—His Fall and Execution—The Earl of Kildare, Chief Governor—John Earl of Ormond—Rival Governments of Gerald Earl of Kildare and Lord Grey—Richard III.

The short, but disturbed reign of Henry IV. was productive of few memorable incidents in Ireland, though its intestine disorders still continued, and in Ulster, were much aggravated by frequent invasions of the Scots. The doubtful title by which the new sovereign held his crown, made him peculiarly solicitous to conciliate the good opinion of all his subjects; and at the commencement of his reign, he declared that he would make Ireland a particular object of his attention. To give weight and dignity to the government, he appointed Thomas duke of Lancaster, his second son, vicegerent. The young prince commenced his administration by a vigorous effort to restore tranquillity to Leinster and Meath; and his exertions were bravely seconded by the citizens of Dublin, who, on the 11th of

July 1402, marched under the command of John Drake, their provost, against the insurgents of Wicklow, of whom they slew many hundreds. Several of the Leinster chieftains were again forced to submission; and in 1405, a parliament which assembled at Castledermot, resolved to adopt effectual measures against the insurgents of Ulster, and to repel the invasion of the Scots in that province. Upon this occasion the citizens of Dublin again displayed their loyalty, by fitting out, in conjunction with those of Drogheda, a fleet of barks, with which they carried on a marauding war on the coasts of Scotland, and avenged the depredations committed in this country. They even extended their hostilities to Wales, from whence they brought off the shrine of St. Cubin, a famous Welch saint, and with all the importance of victory, deposited it in the cathedral. For these services, king Henry IV. conferred on Thomas Cusack, the provost, and his successors, the title of mayor, with his licence, that a gilded sword should be borne before them for ever.

But Art Mac Murchard still continued to set the government at defiance; and having seduced other chieftains from their allegiance, appeared in 1407, at the head of a considerable force. Scrope, the king's deputy, aided by Kildare and the young earl of Ormond, attacked and routed him with considerable slaughter, and then marched to Callan, in the county of Kilkenny, where he defeated another insurgent force under De Burgo and O'Carrol, who lost eight hundred men. But these successes, however important, were not sufficient to check the spirit of insurrection which generally prevailed, while the authority of government was still openly despised by some of the great lords of English race. The conduct of Kildare having incurred some suspicion, he was imprisoned and fined three hundred marks; but the duke of Lancaster, about the same time, was defeated under the very walls of the capital, and his life brought into imminent danger. In 1409, he retired from the administration, and returned to England, leaving the public defence in the hands of Butler, the prior of St. John of Jeru-

salem. The deputy continued with no greater success to resist the perpetual incursions of the Irish insurgents, who, at this time, appear to have been complete masters of the open country, so that the borderers were frequently obliged to secure themselves from their depredations by bribes and pensions, usually known by the name of Black Rent.

The state of the country was not improved during the reign of Henry V. who ascended the throne of England in 1412. That renowned monarch was too much occupied with the conquest of France, to regard the greater glory of tranquillizing Ireland; and his vicegerents who succeeded each other in rapid succession, could do little more than preserve the English settlers from total extinction. Sir John Talbot, lord Furnival, who was appointed to the Irish government in 1414, compelled Art Mac Murchard, the turbulent chieftain of Leinster, to renew his homage, and give his son as a hostage for his future good conduct: but during his long administration, which continued six years, he was unable to enlarge the

English pale, or to subdue the dreadful animosities which prevailed between the two races. All the English who refused to adopt their language and manners, were treated as aliens and intruders by the Irish; while such of the latter as ventured to seek a subsistence in England, were often driven from that country, with circumstances of great contumely; and, even students who resorted to England for education, were excluded from the Inns of Court. The dissensions between the new and old English prevailed at the same time with considerable violence; and in every quarter, the wretched country was the prey of contending factions.

The government of lord Furnival was marked with great vigour; but his oppressive exactions rendered him an object of detestation to all parties; and in 1429 he was removed to give place to the popular earl of Ormond, who, after serving his sovereign in many brilliant campaigns in France, returned to his native country with such ample powers, as intimated the great confidence reposed in him, both by the crown and the people. He immediately

summoned a parliament, who, by their liberality in providing for the exigencies of the state, manifested their extraordinary respect for the new chief governor; and he cheerfully transmitted to the king a petition from the parliament, in which were enumerated the various evils that prevailed in church and state. Ormond retained his high office until some time after the death of Henry V. and by his great vigilance and activity, repressed all attempts of the disaffected to disturb the general tranquillity of the nation, though local factions still continued as prevalent as ever. For a long period, a terrible feud had subsisted between the citizens of Waterford, the Powers of that county, and the O'Driscols of Cork. In the year 1368, the Powers and O'Driscols united their forces to plunder the city of Waterford; but John Malpas, the mayor, attended by the sheriff of the county, and Richard Walsh, the master of St. John of Jerusalem, proceeded with several ships to meet the enemy. An action ensued, in which the Waterfordians were defeated, the mayor, the sheriff, and the master of the hos-

pital, with ninety-six worthy citizens, or merchant strangers being among the slain: and on the other side fell Power, the lord of Don-Isle, with his brothers, and some principal persons of the sept of O'Driscol. But the men of Waterford fully avenged this disgrace some years after. The Powers and O'Driscols having effected a landing at Tramore, Simon Wickin, the mayor of Waterford, with a large body of the citizens, attacked them at Ballymacadane, and slew one hundred and sixty. The enemy flying to their ships, the mayor pursued them by sea with a strong band of men in armour, and arriving before O'Driscol's strong castle of Baltimore, on Christmas-day, he landed his men, and marched up to the gate. The porter was desired to tell his lord that the mayor of Waterford was come to the haven with a ship of wine, and would gladly come in to see him. Unable to make an effectual resistance, O'Driscol ordered the gates to be thrown open, and surrendered with six of his sons, who were brought in triumph to Waterford.

The death of Henry V., in 1422, and the

succession of an infant monarch, proved a serious impediment to the further reformation of the country. The insurgents rose in arms in various quarters; and to intimidate them, the English regency nominated the earl of March and Ulster lord lieutenant, with the bishop of Meath as his deputy, who was not admitted to his office without violent altercation. He was soon displaced by the earl of Ormond, whose attention was quickly called to the northern provinces, where fresh incursions of the Scottish rovers enabled the Ulster Irish to commit terrible depredations on the English settlements. The earl of March and Ulster now considered it necessary to repair to Ireland, and execute his office in person, to rescue his inheritance from those invaders; but dying suddenly at Trim, he was succeeded by Talbot, lord Furnival; who, after an administration of a few months, again gave place to the earl of Ormond. This nobleman used the most vigorous measures to restore tranquillity to Ulster; and ultimately succeeded in compelling O'Neill, and many of the subordinate chieftains to resign

all the lands and possessions formerly enjoyed by the earl of Ulster, and acknowledge themselves vassals of Richard, duke of York, the heir and representative of the noble house of De Burgo. They were also forced to relinquish the tribute generally known by the name of Black Rent; and they agreed to serve in the king's army with their followers, when required by the lord deputy.

Though a considerable period of comparative security from the native insurgents ensued, yet the frequent succession of English governors which followed, created the most violent jealousies amongst the great lords of the old English race. Since the accession of the Lancastrian princes, the families of Kildare and Desmond appear to have been wholly unnoticed; and the earl of Ormond was the only nobleman of Irish birth, in whom the crown placed any confidence. James Fitz-Gerald had, in 1418, unjustly usurped the title and vast domains of Desmond, from the rightful possessor, under the following pretext. Gerald, surnamed the Poet, having been murdered

in the Island of Kerry, in 1397, was succeeded by his son John, a man of distinguished valour. He had been knighted for his services to the crown; and after returning from an expedition to Scotland, he collected a force to attack the earl of Ormond, with whom he had a quarrel. They met near the abbey of Innislaught, in Tipperary, in the month of September, 1399: happily, however, no blood was shed; for the two parties settled their dispute by negociation, and signed a mutual engagement to preserve a strict peace and amity. But on the same night, while his army was passing over the river Suir, at the ford of Ardfinnan, the brave earl John was drowned. He left by his wife, a daughter of Roche, lord Fermoy, an infant son, named Thomas, the sole inheritor of his vast possessions. This young nobleman, when approaching towards manhood, was benighted, while hunting between Tralee and Newcastle, in the county of Limerick. He found a place of shelter at Abbeyfeale, in the house of a respectable tenant named William Mac Cormac; and during

his short residence there, he conceived a passion for the beautiful daughter of his host. Virtuous as well as beautiful, she resisted every hint of a dishonourable nature; and this so increased the young earl's admiration for the object of his affections, that he made Catherine Mac Cormac his wife. His uncle James, a crafty and ambitious man, represented this inferior match as such a degradation to the family, that he prevailed on his friends and followers to abandon him; then forcibly expelled him from his estates, and finally compelled him to make a formal surrender of the earldom to himself, on assigning to his son, the manors of Mallow, Broghill, and Kilcolman. After this, Thomas retired to France; where he died in 1420, broken-hearted, at Rouen; and king Henry V. honoured his funeral with his presence.

Earl James now sought to secure and extend the vast possessions which he had thus basely acquired, by methods equally unjustifiable. By an illegal grant from Robert Cogan, he took possession of a great district, called

the kingdom of Cork, to the prejudice of the rightful claims of the families of Carew and De Courcey; and exercising all the powers of an independent prince, he lived in a state of rude magnificence, which greatly augmented his influence among his followers, both of the English and Irish race. He was surrounded by life-guards, styled himself earl of Desmond, lord of Decies, O'Connello, and the liberties of Kerry; and the government consolidated his vast power, by giving its sanction to all his usurpations.

The imprudence of this weak policy was soon apparent. In the year 1443, Desmond bade defiance to the government, and commenced hostilities, which the earl of Ormond could terminate only by treating with him as an independent sovereign. A truce was concluded, during which Desmond found means to strengthen his party, and to intrigue with the enemies of the chief governor; and he ultimately succeeded in rendering this once popular nobleman suspected by the English government. Henry VI. commanded Ormond

to repair to his presence without delay, to explain the causes of the public discontents. The lord lieutenant, perceiving the malice of his enemies, summoned a meeting of the nobility and gentry of the pale to attend him at Drogheda; and in the presence of the English agents, who had brought the royal mandate, he demanded that his most inveterate enemy should stand forth and declare in what he had offended, or point out a single instance in which the subject or the state had suffered by his injustice or neglect. This magnanimity produced a powerful effect; and such unequivocal testimony was given to the viceroy's integrity by the whole assembly, that the order for his departure was suspended. Yet the determined rancour of his indefatigable enemies soon after prevailed, and Ormond was removed from the government, on account, as it was alleged, of his age and infirmities, which rendered him incapable of conducting the affairs of state. Some further attempts were made to injure this excellent nobleman in the estimation of his sovereign; but they failed of

success, king Henry declaring by patent, that the earl of Ormond was faithful in his allegiance, meritorious in his services, and untainted in his fame; and that no one, on pain of his indignation, should reproach his conduct.

Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford, was constituted lord lieutenant, in 1445. Fierce hostilities were at that time raging both in Leinster and Munster; and Desmond was twice defeated at Gleanfogarta and Ballyanfoil, by Turlogh O'Brien, and Mac William of Clanrickard. The commotions of Leinster were speedily quelled by the vigour of the chief governor, who afterward called a parliament at Trim, which passed some trifling enactments that had little influence on the disordered state of the nation. Another change in the Irish government was occasioned shortly after, by the violent feuds which commenced in England about this time, between the houses of York and Lancaster, the particulars of which are copiously detailed in the history of that country. The superior claims of Richard duke of York to the crown, as well as his

personal qualifications, had rendered him the idol of the people, while the imbecile character of the king, who was entirely governed by his consort and his partisans, caused his authority to be regarded with contempt; and it was manifest, that the great majority of the nation only waited for a favourable opportunity to shake it off. Under these circumstances the ruling party anxiously sought a pretext to remove the duke of York to a distance from the court; and this was found, in the alarming state of Ireland in 1449, when all the provinces were so embroiled by the furious contests of rival chieftains, as to threaten a general rebellion. But this sagacious prince, who by his alliance with the house of De Burgo, was the inheritor of vast estates in Ireland, comprehending the earldom of Ulster, and the lordships of Connaught, Clare and Meath, would only accept the government, on condition that he should possess all the honour and authority which had been enjoyed by the most distinguished of his predecessors. He stipulated that he should hold the office of lord lieutenant

for ten years, receive the whole revenue of Ireland without account, with an immediate advance of money, and an annual pension of a thousand marks (equal to about £20,000 of our present money)—that he should be empowered to let the king's lands, dispose of all offices, levy troops, appoint his deputy, and return at his pleasure.

The duke of York commenced his viceroyalty with a splendour and magnificence, which speedily drew to his court, men of every party. He received them all with equal kindness, without declaring openly for any; he engaged their affections by his affability and condescension; moderated their violence by his prudence and caution, and in the whole of his conduct united all the dignity of an English prince, with the cordiality of a kinsman of the Irish subjects. The earl of Ormond, who was known to be particularly attached to the house of Lancaster, was received at the Irish court with all the attention due to his high rank, and he returned these civilities by a like exterior of respect and deference. Desmond, less expe-

rienced in the wiles of courts, was quite captivated by the obliging demeanour of the royal duke; and the honour conferred upon him soon after, in conjunction with lord Ormond, of being chosen sponsor to George, afterwards the ill-fated duke of Clarence, who was born in the castle of Dublin, so intoxicated his vanity, that it encouraged him to many fresh acts of insolence and oppression.

The presence of the duke of York appears to have speedily calmed those commotions, from which so much danger had been apprehended; and during the two years which followed, all his transactions with the natives, were marked by justice and impartiality: the English settlements were protected, and many enactments passed by parliaments held in Dublin and Drogheda, for improving the condition of the people. But the successful progress of the partisans of the House of York in England, now began to open a wider field for his ambition. The insurrection of Jack Cade, an Irishman, who had assumed the popular name of Mortimer, developed the dispo-

sition of the people towards the reigning family. The queen and her friends circulated reports, that the insurrection had been planned by the duke of York; that he was about to lead an Irish army into England to dethrone the king; and letters were despatched to the western coast to oppose his landing. But whatever may have been his ulterior designs, he deemed it prudent for the present, to return to England to defend his character against these aspersions; and eluding the vigilance of his adversaries, he arrived in London without an army, or any train that could give just cause of suspicion.

The duke, at his departure, appointed the earl of Ormond his deputy, who was soon after created lord lieutenant by the king; but dying in 1452, he was succeeded in the administration by Sir Edward Fitz-Eustace, who exerted himself with great vigour to suppress the commotions which broke out soon after. In one of his expeditions against the insurgents of Leinster, an affecting incident occurred, which deserves to be recorded. O'Connor,

the Irish chieftain of Offaley, having made an inroad into Kildare, was attacked and routed by the lord deputy. While flying from his pursuers, O'Connor fell from his horse, and his son, the companion of his danger, stopped and remounted him. The chieftain, unfortunately, falling a second time to the ground, a generous contest commenced between the father and son, which of them should be resigned to the mercy of the enemy. The youth earnestly urged the father to take his horse, and leave him to his fate, which the old man obstinately refused, and commanding his son to fly, was soon made prisoner. But when the deputy heard the circumstances of the case, he generously set his captive at liberty.

About the same period, O'Neill and other chieftains of the North, engaged in some marauding expeditions; and having fitted out a fleet of barks, they attacked some English vessels which had sailed from Dublin, and having rifled them, they made the passengers prisoners, amongst whom was Michael Tregury, the archbishop of Dublin. Enraged at this insult,

the citizens of the capital assembled a considerable force which marched against these pirates; and coming up with them at Ardglass, a desperate engagement ensued, in which the Northern Irish were completely discomfited with the slaughter of five or six hundred men, while O'Neill, their general, was taken prisoner.

The fatal rivalry which had so long existed between the houses of York and Lancaster, now burst forth into terrible hostilities, and Ireland fully participated in the calamitous consequences which flowed from the Wars of the Roses. The birth of a young prince to Henry VI. pointed out to the Yorkists the necessity of immediate operations to place duke Richard on the throne, which, as descended from an elder branch of the royal family, he claimed as his rightful inheritance. Their first effort was successful. The parliament, under pretence of Henry's indisposition, proclaimed the duke of York, protector of the realm; and the battle of St. Alban's soon after put the king's person into his ds. This

event again called the Geraldines, the attached friends of the house of York, to power. In 1454, Thomas earl of Kildare was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland: with the exception of the rival family of Butler, and a few of the Irish chieftains, the whole country submitted to his sway; and he maintained his government with tolerable tranquillity till 1459, when the defeat which the Yorkists received at Bloreheath, compelled the duke to seek refuge in Ireland from his triumphant enemies.

Richard was received in this country, not as a fugitive, but as its chief governor, and the rightful heir to the crown of England; and while the English parliament proclaimed all his adherents rebels and traitors, and writs were issued to seize and bring them to justice, the parliament of Ireland enacted that it should be high treason to carry these writs into execution. The great body of the Irish subjects, at the same time, declared for the cause of the Yorkists, and every necessary precaution was adopted to protect the duke and his partisans from the malice of their enemies.

The defeat of the Lancastrians at Northampton, by prince Edward and the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, calling duke Richard once more from his retirement, the Irish manifested their ardour in his cause by flocking in thousands to his standard. His force received a powerful augmentation on his landing in England; and, reaching London at the head of a formidable army, the parliament again declared him the king's successor. But, before the close of the year, the Yorkists were destined to experience another reverse. The intrepid queen Margaret having fled to her friends in the North of England, was enabled to bring twenty thousand men into the field. Richard marched against her with vastly inferior forces, and the two armies met at Wakefield on the 31st of December, when a sanguinary battle ensued, in which duke Richard fell, with three thousand of his followers. This victory was attributed chiefly to the skill and bravery of the earl of Ormond, who commanded one wing of the Lancastrians. But so sudden were the vicissitudes of this fatal contest, that in three

months after the battle of Wakefield, victory declared for the Yorkists at the second battle of St. Alban's, the unfortunate Henry was deposed, and the crown of England placed on the head of Edward IV. the eldest son of the late duke of York. The brave earl of Ormond was taken prisoner on this occasion and beheaded.

The Anglo-Irish had repaired in such numbers to England to take part in this terrible war, that in many parts of the country, the English settlements were left nearly without protection, and the native chieftains seized the opportunity of renewing their hostile incursions; but no general plan of confederacy appears to have been formed against the English power; and the chiefs were pacified by the promise of pensions for the protection of their English neighbours, of which they proudly boasted as an acknowledgment of their sovereignty. Great mischief was done in Leinster and Munster during these fatal commotions: towns were burnt, castles destroyed, and many of the peaceable inhabitants put to

the sword. In the county of Cork, the lords Courcey and Arundel were driven from their great possessions by the Mac Arthys; and at Bearhaven, every individual of the great family of the Barnewalls, was slain by the O'Sullivans, except the wife of the chief, who escaped to Dublin, where she was soon after delivered of a son, from whom the lords Kingsland and Trimblestown are descended. Effects, perhaps, still more fatal, flowed from the resentment engendered in the breasts of the great rival lords who engaged in the contests of England, which burst forth on subsequent occasions with dreadful violence, and greatly retarded the prosperity of the country.

In the first year of Edward IV. George duke of Clarence, was nominated lord lieutenant, with Sir Roland Fitz-Eustace, lord Portlester, as his deputy. In 1462, the Irish parliament passed a bill of attainder against several adherents of king Henry, amongst whom were included Sir John Butler, brother and heir to the late earl of Ormond, and other individuals of his family. Sir John took refuge in Mun-

ster with a large train of followers from England, and he soon raised a force amongst his dependents in the South, with which he conceived himself strong enough to support his own rights and those of the dethroned king Henry. Fitz-Eustace might have found it difficult to suppress these alarming hostilities, had not Thomas Fitz-Gerald, who had just succeeded his father in the earldom of Desmond, flown to arms against the enemies of the house of York. Having collected amongst his followers an army of twenty thousand men, he marched against the Butlers, without demanding any assistance from the government. His first efforts were attended with disaster; his brother Gerald was taken prisoner, and Sir John Butler entering Leinster, got possession of Wexford. Thither Desmond pursued him, and challenged him to a pitched battle, which, in the romantic spirit of the times, was accepted, though the army of Ormond was vastly inferior in number. After a desperate encounter, Sir John Butler was defeated, and driven from his conquests, while Desmond following up his victory, took pos-

session of Kilkenny, and others of his towns, and inflicted on his lands the severest military execution.

For this important service Desmond was rewarded by Edward with the high office of lord deputy, an elevation which led to his ruin. Surrounded by his former associates, he displayed the same rude magnificence, as if still on his own lands: his undisguised conduct afforded grounds of suspicion to his ever watchful enemies; and an unfortunate expedition of the lord deputy into Meath soon furnished cause of complaint. In an engagement with the Irish insurgents, Desmond was totally routed and taken prisoner, with some of his principal officers. The son of O'Connor of Offaley, who on a former occasion had shown so generous a concern for the safety of his father, now repaid the kindness with which the latter was treated by the lord deputy Fitz-Eustace, and released his noble captive with many of his followers. But the weakness thus manifested by the government encouraged the disaffected to rise in various

quarters. Turlogh O'Brien having expelled numbers of the English settlers in Munster, crossed the Shannon, and by forming a confederacy with the Irish chieftains of Leinster threatened to overwhelm the English pale, which Desmond had no means of averting but by ceding to him a considerable portion of his conquests, and agreeing to secure to him an annual tribute from the citizens of Limerick.

The consequence and popularity of the lord deputy being greatly diminished by these unfortunate expeditions, his enemies openly accused him of a suspicious intercourse with the Irish, while the English subjects were oppressed by illegal exactions. A petty feud that occurred in the neighbourhood of Dublin, in which nine of Desmond's followers were slain, soon brought the matter to an issue. Shirwood, bishop of Meath, an Englishman, was accused by the deputy as the instigator of this quarrel; the bishop recriminated with violence, and the dispute at length, arose to such a height, that both parties determined to lay their complaints before the throne. The bishop having re-

paired to the court of Edward, was speedily followed by Desmond, who having received the most honourable testimonials of his loyalty and good conduct, obtained a complete triumph over his accusers; and after his return, he conducted his government in a manner more favourable to the English interests. The Irish who were permitted to reside among the English subjects, were required to take their surnames, conform to their mode of dress, and take the oath of allegiance to king Edward. A constable was, at the same time, appointed for every town; and it was ordained that all the inhabitants, from sixteen to sixty, should be exercised in archery on every holiday. But though the earl of Desmond appears to have conducted the administration for nearly three years, with credit to himself and advantage to the country, this did not abate the malice of those enemies, who incessantly sought his ruin. The marriage of king Edward with lady Elizabeth Grey, facilitated their designs: her father was soon created earl of Rivers, and lord high constable of England, Tiptoft, earl of

Worcester, having resigned that high office in his favour, and for which he received, in exchange, the lord deputyship of Ireland, from which Desmond was now removed. The Irish annalists state, that these changes were effected through the intrigues of the new queen, who had imbibed a violent hatred of Desmond from the following cause. King Edward, soon after his marriage, having a dispute with the queen, exclaimed, that if he had taken his cousin Desmond's advice, her pride would have been more humbled. After their reconciliation, the king is said to have explained the matter more fully to her, by which her resentment was so highly provoked, that she gave secret instructions to the new deputy, to examine strictly into the conduct of his predecessor, and execute upon him the utmost rigour of the law.

The earl of Worcester entered on his office in October 1467, and immediately convened a parliament in Dublin, in which the abolition of Black-Rent was enacted, evidently for the purpose of disparaging the conduct of Desmond in the treaties he had made with the Irish.

Another act was passed declaratory of the grant which Pope Adrian had made, in right of the church, of the kingdom of Ireland to the king of England and his heirs for ever; and calling on all bishops to excommunicate disobedient subjects, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, to be forfeited by every prelate refusing obedience to this ordinance. Many of the partisans of Desmond were prosecuted by this parliament, which adjourned soon after to Drogheda, where the enemies of the Geraldines gave full scope to their resentment. Thomas, earl of Desmond, Thomas, earl of Kildare, and Edward Plunket, esq. were attainted of treason, for alliance and fostering with the king's Irish enemies, and supporting them against the king's subjects, and their lands and goods were forfeited.

The unhappy Desmond, either conscious of his innocence, or relying on his great power and influence, instantly repaired to the chief governor to justify his conduct; but to the astonishment and terror of all his friends, he was brought to the scaffold and beheaded on the

15th of February, 1468. The earl of Kildare was imprisoned; but he effected his escape, and repairing to the court of Edward, he boldly complained of the injuries which his family had suffered, and urged the great services which they had rendered to the crown. His representations were favourably heard, and he was not only pardoned, but, his attainder being reversed by the very same parliament that had passed it, he was restored to his estate and dignity; and, to complete his triumph, was constituted lord deputy in the room of the earl of Worcester, who, soon after his return to England, suffered the same punishment as that which he had inflicted on the earl of Desmond. The attainder of this last ill-fated lord was also reversed, and James, his eldest son, now only in his ninth year, restored to all the possessions and dignities of his family.

The short-lived revolution which once more placed Henry VI. on the throne of England, was soon followed by his deposition and death. But these changes produced no alteration in the Irish administration, which Kildare con-

ducted for six years with considerable vigour and success. For the protection of the English pale, comprising the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, and Louth, he established a body of one hundred and sixty archers, and sixty-four spearmen, which was styled the Fraternity of St. George. Their officers consisted of the principal nobility and gentry of these counties, who had particular authority to apprehend all rebels and others who refused due obedience to the law. But his undeviating attachment to the house of York, and his zealous services did not secure to Kildare the permanent possession of the royal favour.

Since the execution of James earl of Ormond, and the defeat of his next brother and heir, Sir John Butler, by Desmond, that family had remained in disgrace and privacy; but they carefully watched the movements of their rivals, the Geraldines; and Sir John having found means to reconcile himself to king Edward, not only obtained his pardon, but was invited to attend him into France. His polished manners and graceful deportment soon

rendered him a peculiar favourite with a prince distinguished for similar qualities; and Edward is said to have declared of him upon one occacasion, "He is the goodliest knight and finest gentleman in Christendom; and if good breeding, nurture, and liberal qualities were lost in the world, they might be found in John earl of Ormond." The favour thus shown to their chief could not fail to give spirit to the Butlers, who now exerted themselves with such success to procure the humiliation of the Geraldines, that in 1475, Kildare was removed from the government, and Shirwood, bishop of Meath, the old enemy of his house, appointed to succeed him. A parliament was immediately convened by this prelate, which repealed the bill of attainder passed against the earl of Ormond, and restored the Butlers to all their former possessions and dignities. The ancient quarrels of the two great rival families instantly burst forth with a violence augmented by the recent injuries which they had inflicted on each other, and which threatened to involve the whole island in civil war. The king at length became alarmed

by the feuds of these great rival lords, and issued the royal mandate to the archbishop of Armagh to mediate between them; but this was rendered unnecessary by the death of Kildare in 1478; and about the same time John earl of Ormond made a pilgrimage o the Holy Land, where he ended his days soon after; and was succeeded in his titles and vast possessions by his brother Thomas, who was grandfather of the celebrated Anna Bullen, and consequently, great-grandfather of queen Elizabeth.

Gerald, the young earl of Kildare, soon evincing the spirit of his family, suceeded in obtaining the dismissal of the lord deputy Shirwood, and procuring himself to be appointed in his room. The king, however, quickly repented of this nomination, and sent over Henry lord Grey, as deputy to the duke of Clarence. But Kildare, pretending some informalities in the letters of appointment, refused to resign his office; lord Portlester, the chancellor, withdrew with the great seal; and Keating, the constable of the castle of

Dublin, fortified it against the new deputy. The contentions of these rival governors now threatened to throw the country into terrible confusion. Kildare continued his state, and convened a parliament; while lord Grey summoned a similar assembly, and annulled all the acts passed in that of his opponent. During this contest the office of lord lieutenant became vacant by the death of the duke of Clarence; but king Edward immediately conferred it on his infant son George, continuing Grey in the post of lord deputy. The Irish council, however, chose Kildare to fill the office, insisting that the right of election was vested in them by a statute of Henry II.

The country was now involved in such anarchy and confusion, that king Edward became alarmed, and summoned the earl of Kildare, the archbishop of Dublin, and some other distinguished individuals to attend his court in London, and acquaint him with the causes of these disorders. Preston, lord Gormanston, was appointed, at the same time successor, to Grey, who was also com-

manded to repair to England. In the end the representations of Kildare proved so satisfactory, that he was reinstated in his office with a standing force, consisting of one hundred and fifty horsemen, whose deficiencies were to be supplied from England, if the Irish revenue should prove unequal to their maintenance. How low must have been the finances of the country at that day, when its ability was doubted to pay a small troop, whose annual expense did not exceed five hundred pounds!

Kildare continued to govern Ireland with great wisdom and vigour through the remaining years of the reign of Edward IV. and the usurpation of Richard III. He speedily allayed the animosities which his contentions with lord Grey had excited, and ratified such acts of either of the rival parliaments as seemed conducive to the interests of the crown or the welfare of the people. By giving his sister in marriage to Con O'Neill, the chieftain of Tyrone, he greatly increased his influence with the native Irish, and he was particularly sedulous in guarding the English counties against

the depredations and encroachments of the disaffected Irish septs, who were now so generally weakened, that their attention was chiefly confined to their own local interests.

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